

# History and Ethnoarchaeology in Eastern Nigeria

A Study of Igbo-Igala relations with  
special reference to the  
Anambra Valley

Philip Adigwe Oguagha  
and  
Alex Ikechukwu Okpoko

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## GENERAL EDITORS

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D.R . Walker, M.A.

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## PREFACE

In the following volume we have attempted to demonstrate relationships between the Igbo and the Igala of the Anambra valley from proto-historic to historic times as decipherable from historical, ethnoarchaeological, oral traditional and linguistic data. Since no other work of this kind has been carried out in the Anambra valley and neighbouring areas, there is a lack of comparative material, but it would appear from the oral traditions of both peoples that before about 1650 A.D. the pattern of interaction between them away from the rivers was that of Igbo migrations into Igala land, although along the Niger the Igala travelled southwards into Igbo territory where they established some settlements. The Igbo ritual centre at Nri had extended its influence into Igala country. In addition, archaeological evidence from Igbo-Ukwu in Igboland seems to indicate that what was certainly in later times Igala country was one of the gateways through which exotic commodities were imported into Igboland.

The increasing demands of the overseas trade from ports to the south in the 17th and 18th centuries vastly expanded the commercial exchanges between the two peoples and wrought changes in the pattern of trade routes, the volume of trade, and its organization. Along the Niger the dominant powers became the Aboh Kingdom in Igboland, and the Idah kingdom in Igala country. To avoid internecine conflicts which were disruptive to trade, a boundary market was established on a sandbank opposite Asaba which marked the limits of their respective influences. Nevertheless wealthy merchants from both areas travelled up and down the river into each other's spheres of influence. On the overland routes there were no such rivalries. While the Igala and Nupe merchants operated in northern Igboland, various Igbo groups such as the Nri, Awka, Nike and Nsukka were active in Igala country. The Awka smiths and traders were perhaps the most active Igbo group in Igala country. The appearance from the south of Aro traders in northern Igboland from the 18th century acted as an incentive for more Igbo merchants to travel to Igala kingdom to procure the goods required by the Aro.

The overseas trade also gave rise to new political developments. The trading states along the Rivers Niger and Anambra such as Aboh and Osomari in Igboland, and Idah and Ogurugu in the Igala section, engaged in raids on their neighbours for the capture of slaves and the control of trade routes. The traditions of such attacks from Ogurugu on parts of both the Igala kingdom and on Igboland feature prominently in the oral accounts. By the middle of the 19th century, the fame of the Ata of Idah whose kingdom had grown prosperous and powerful, began to attract Igbo rulers who undertook journeys to the Ata's court to obtain confirmation of their titles. The upshot of these centuries of migration, trade, intermarriage, and military clashes was that mutual influences are discernible in both culture areas. Away from the rivers Igala influence was mainly political, while along the Niger it was more cultural; Igbo influence on the Igala by both routes was more linguistic, and cultural in nature.

The archaeological and ethnoarchaeological evidence from the valley will be shown, in Part 2, to support and amplify the historical and oral-traditional evidence and offers a time depth of 600-1000 years for the development of relationships between the two linguistic groups.

The oral traditions collected from Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah and elsewhere in the region by both of us suggest forms of Igbo - Igala interactions. As discussed in Part 1, two major periods of contacts are discernible from the traditions. These are:- (i) early phase which was most probably due to trading and hunting activities and (ii) later phase marked by conflicts between the two groups.

Archaeological surveys and excavations carried out in the course of this research similarly suggest a dichotomy. Although no identifiable weapons were recovered from any of the archaeological sites studied, the ramparts at Umuekete - Aguleri, Nsukka, Ogurugu, Ifite - Ogwari and Umueje, all in the Anambra valley, bear testimony to a period or periods of conflict, as mentioned by Hartle who speaks of eleven forts between Unadu and Ogurugu. War and raiding in the Anambra valley, conflicts in which the Igbo and the Igala were involved, belong to the later phase in their relationships.

The cultural materials recovered from the excavations, however, suggest more peaceful forms of Igbo - Igala interactions dating most probably to as far back in time as the 13th century A.D. and from the 'early phase' of inter-action. The Igbo-Ukwu finds seem to extend such interactions back to the 9th century A.D. Similarities in the pottery (in form, decoration, thickness and manufacturing techniques) from Idah and Aguleri suggest a considerable degree of interaction or common tradition between the people of these two and related areas perhaps from about the 13th century A.D., interactions which could be in the form of trade or peaceful movements of people from Igala to Igbo areas or vice versa. The presence of horses at Umuekete (Aguleri) also suggests trading connections between the Igbo and their northern Igala neighbours from perhaps as early as the 13th century A.D., while the 'horseman hilt' and other finds from Igbo-Ukwu seem to extend these trading connections back to the 9th century A.D. Although we cannot say when horses were first imported into Igboland by Igala, it is well established that in recent centuries the northern Igbo have bought horses in considerable numbers from the Igala. Whether contacts between the Igbo and the Igala (with a centralized kingship) influenced the establishment of kingship in Aguleri and by extension to Nri/Oreri, is difficult to determine, but it seems significant that status differentiation is still today higher in Aguleri and Nri/Oreri than in any of the other neighbouring Igbo areas to the south.

This study also discusses aspects of Igbo and Igala subsistence activities. The faunal remains from the various sites show a heavy dependence on domesticated animals supplemented by fishing and hunting activities. Even though there is nothing in the excavations suggesting farming methods or the types of food produced, historical, oral and ethnographic evidence suggest that yam cultivation in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah is of great antiquity.

The ceramic products (including the smoking pipes) and other industrial artefacts like spindle whorls, iron smelting/smithing debris, also show that throughout the Anambra valley similar technological activities were undertaken from the 13th to 16th centuries A.D. by both peoples. However, the Igbo and Igala peoples stopped the smelting of iron and weaving of cloth with the importation of iron products and clothing materials from Europe, and it is only the similarities between the present day and the excavated pottery which remain to suggest a long continuity into recent times in both the Igbo and Igala areas.

This study is the first of its kind in Nigeria in which historical evidence and oral traditions have been used to generate hypotheses that were tested archaeologically and the archaeological data seems to corroborate the historical and oral traditional evidence. In this instance, therefore, it appears to have been confirmed that oral traditions (including traditions dealing with origins), if properly collected and interpreted, have significant contributions to make to historical reconstructions. The study of the excavated cultural material depended a great deal on ethnographic information; this approach makes it much more feasible to relate the materials to the cultural nuances of the people concerned. The results suggest that the Igbo and Igala groups interacted with each other from at least the 13th century A.D., long before the colonial period, and studies of this kind, which demonstrate mutual interactions amongst Nigerian peoples in the pre-colonial times, would be of much socio-political value especially during this period of national development and integration.

There are certain issues which should form subjects for future research in the valley. For instance, a testable hypothesis derivable from the oral traditions is that Aguleri was the dispersal point for the descendants of Eri, the progenitor of the Umueri clan. Ethnoarchaeological studies carried out in the Umueri towns (using the methods adopted in these studies) may prove useful in testing this hypothesis.

Even though studies by Gray (1962:182), Onwuejeogwu (1972) and Henderson (1972:60-61) suggest the antiquity of yam cultivation in this valley, we do not know when the species was first cultivated and when and how it spread. Tropical conditions do not often favour the preservation of leaves, tuber or woody fragments and the chances of preservation of cooking or farming equipment, like wooden mortars and pestles used for preparation of tuberous crops are quite low. Since direct and indirect archaeological evidence is difficult to come by, we have to rely on entomological, oral traditional, linguistic and ethnographic evidence to supplement the archaeological evidence (see Alexander and Coursey 1969; Alexander 1971; Okiy 1960, Coursey 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1980; Ayensu and Coursey 1972; Shaw 1972).

The presence of iron slag, tuyères, furnace fragment and iron ore lumps at Aguleri and Idah show that these are potential areas for the further study of iron smelting processes and the beginning of iron technology in the Lower Niger Basin. It is still possible to obtain information about local iron-technology (including furnace forms, quantities of ore and crude iron produced), and associated social and ritual behaviour from Aguleri and Idah where detailed information on iron smelting processes is still available. Such information will be of value to historians and ethnoarchaeologists in the future (Schulze 1971; Anozie 1981).

Given the available oral traditional and ethnographic evidence, the Anambra valley is also a suitable area for the further study of settlement patterns. In the Anambra valley, as in other parts of West Africa, the slave trade and the colonial conquest which led to the plunder of natural resources and introduction of cash crops have gone a long way to destroying some aspects of indigenous society (which includes traditional buildings and building processes and settlement patterns). Nevertheless, of all cultural forms, architecture is one of the most persistent and conservative (see Aniakor, 1980). Thus for a better understanding of types of buildings, building processes and settlement arrangement in the Anambra valley during

pre-colonial or proto-historic period, it is first necessary to study and properly document types presently in existence in this valley, by making use of ethnographic data, oral traditional accounts, writings of colonial officials and missionaries.

Lastly, the Anambra valley, Nri and Oreri should constitute a key area in the search for more reliable dating and interpretation of the Igbo-Ukwu finds and the developments of the 1st millennium A.D. in the Lower Niger Valley and should go on side by side with Niger Delta studies (Nzewunwa 1980).

Part i

Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology  
in the Anambra Valley

A. I. Okpoko

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Mr. L.T. Quist and Mrs. J. Williams drew the illustrations and Mrs. J. Osuma and Mr. S. Ohwarhua typed this study. Dr. F.N. Anozie and Mr. D. Calvocoressi read through the drafts and made useful suggestions.

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I dedicate this work to my parents Mr. Fidelis Ekwunife Okpoko and Mrs. Philomina Onuekwunma Okpoko and my wife Mrs. Josephine Amaka Okpoko for their love.

Alex Ikechukwu Okpoko

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This volume deals primarily with Igbo-Igala relations from proto-historic to historic times as is decipherable through archaeology in parts of the Anambra valley which lie in the borderlands between the two peoples.

In 1959/60 and 1964 archaeological excavations were undertaken in the Lower Niger region by Shaw at Igbo-ukwu, and by Hartle (1967, 1972) south of the Anambra valley but having links with it, and in April 1966 the first excavation in Igalaland to the north was carried out at Idah by Daniels. Ten years later in early 1976, Anozie carried out the first archaeological survey of Aguleri in the Anambra Valley. Thus, prior to the author's research in 1976-83 little or no archaeological work had been done in the Anambra valley. Within this valley, for my research I specifically chose four localities: namely Aguleri, Igbo-ukwu, Ogurugu and Idah. Among the factors motivating the choice of these areas for study were: (1) Shaw's association (1970:268-285) of the archaeological finds at Igbo-ukwu with the institution of Eze-Nri at Oreri/Nri, and the traditional connection between Nri/Oreri and Aguleri (Boston 1960:52-57; Onwuejeogwu 1974a). (2) The suggestion that the Igbo-ukwu finds show some forms of contacts between the Igbo and Igala speaking peoples in the 9th century AD (Shaw 1970:258, 262, 281-2). (3) Aguleri and Ogurugu on Igbo-Igala borderland have oral traditions suggesting connections between them and Idah from at least the 17th century AD. (4) Ogurugu served as the base from which Onoja Oboni invaded and conquered settlements along the Anambra river including Aguleri. (5) Since the present Igala ruling group settled at Idah it was deemed necessary to obtain information from there about movements of Igala people at different points in time. (6) Linguistic and ethnographic information as outlined in Part II of this study suggest some forms of interactions amongst the Igbo and Igala peoples inhabiting the Anambra valley from proto-historic to historic times.

The research objectives were:

- i) Reconstructing the relationships between the Igbo and Igala peoples of the Anambra valley from proto-historic to historic times as decipherable mainly from archaeological but using in conjunction oral traditional, linguistic and ethnographic data.
- ii) Assessing and determining what archaeological value to place on the oral traditions dealing with origins.
- iii) Identifying such aspects of Igbo and Igala peoples' technology and subsistence activities in the past as can be discerned from archaeological and ethnographic sources and determining what light these throw on the relationships between the two peoples.

This volume is divided into two main sections. The first comprises in two chapters an account of my major objectives, the research design for my excavation programme and artifact analysis, and a treatment of ethnographic, linguistic, oral traditional and archaeological background information. The

second section, comprising five chapters contains a report on the research programme as follows: a description of the archaeological excavations and surveys carried out, findings and site chronologies. This is followed by the analysis and description of the artifacts and other important remains, and the interpretations and inferences made from the finds. The final chapter outlines the joint conclusions we draw from the study.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

It was decided to use an ethnoarchaeological approach to the material.

Ethnoarchaeology has been defined in various ways by different scholars (Oswalt 1974; Stanislawski 1974; Stiles 1977; Gould 1978; Tringham 1978; Schiffer 1978; Kramer 1979). However, after a review of the pertinent literature and taking into account the specific archaeological problems to be investigated in the Anambra valley, I concluded that, at least for this project, ethnoarchaeology was best regarded as the study of aspects of the history (including oral traditions), material culture and linguistic characteristics of present inhabitants of the Anambra valley in order to elicit information useful for the location of archaeological sites, their interpretation, and the reconstruction of material and non-material aspects of the ways of life of former inhabitants.

Not only does this definition take proper account of the controversies raging as to the validity or otherwise of the use of ethnographic analogy in archaeological investigations but endorses those objections which I regard as legitimate.

Over the last century archaeologists have become "increasingly aware of the difficulties and limitations in the interpretation of their materials" (Orme 1974:199), especially in attempts at identifying "what and how religious, social and political ideas guided technology, subsistence and settlements" and how these influenced aspects of culture (Andah 1980:59).

The variables of time and space have brought about a distinction being made between two general types of ethnographic analogy. The first type, "New Analogy" - (Ascher 1961) operates in conditions where the ethnographic and the archaeological data are "broadly disparate in time and space" (Stiles 1977:95). In such a situation it is not necessary to demonstrate any connection between the culture providing the archaeological materials and the culture possessing the ethnographic data. At this level the use of ethnography in archaeology is fraught with several difficulties. For instance, in ecological analogy (in which an analysis of present ecological conditions of an area aids the reconstruction of the subsistence and settlement systems of earlier inhabitants of such an area), a possible constraint is the lack of continuity between the ancient and modern microenvironment of the area under investigation (Coe and Flannery 1964:650-654).

Not only must the investigator reasonably assure himself that ecological conditions have in fact remained relatively unchanged, but it seems also that the proponents of the above view assume wrongly that the crucial variable in human cultural history is always and necessarily ecology; such ecological determinism is unproved. With the passage of time people's technology as well as their psychology changes no matter how imperceptibly, and consequently the functions of objects change through

time. Also, since human beings have diverse ways of doing the same thing and can do different things in ways which leave similar material traces, it is at times difficult to know the relationship between patterns of behaviour and their material manifestations.

To minimise these difficulties posed by the "new analogy" archaeologists have tried to develop methods which will allow explanatory propositions regarding the operation of cultural systems to be tested by both archaeological and ethnographic data. (Binford L.R. 1968:269).

The second general type of analogy - "Direct Historical Approach" (Ascher *op.cit.*) - occurs when a connection in time and/or space can be demonstrated between the archaeological and ethnographic cultures. Some degree of historical/cultural continuity between the past and present population can then be assumed. This approach recognises that ethnographic data will be more relevant to the people being studied archaeologically if it can be established from oral tradition, written or other sources that the group presently occupying the area is historically/culturally related to that which occupied the area in the past. It recognises also that functions of objects change with time but that the more recent the period of study the more reliable the ethnographic inference. In such a situation it is often easier to trace direct historical continuity with the past.

Lastly, ethnographic inferences are more reliable if the ethnographic and archaeological data are collected from areas that are geographically identical or at least contiguous. Despite changes which might have occurred through time, the possibility of cultural and environmental similarity is higher in such contiguous areas than in areas that are geographically separated. Scholars have emphasised that the positive contribution of ethnographic analogy to archaeological investigations is in those areas where analysis of current or recent practices and archaeological data indicate continuity (Ascher 1961:317) or where the ethnographic information comes from a group closely related to the prehistoric culture being studied (Anderson *op.cit.*:134). To use the "Direct Historical Approach" properly archaeologists need to carry out ethnographic studies themselves: since they are in the best position to determine what studies are relevant to their archaeological investigations. This is because, apart from the fact that ethnographic studies in areas relevant to archaeology are few, there may be differences between the ethnographic and archaeological studies with regards to aims, methods and data available (Orme 1974:205 Kramer 1979:5).

In this study the "Direct Historical Approach" has been used. Although there has not been any ethnoarchaeological study in the Anambra valley prior to the present research, there exist studies in other parts of the world in which scholars have successfully made use of the "direct historical approach" for archaeological investigations (some covering a greater time depth than the present research). The work of Gould (1971 and 1978), Schmidt (1975 and 1978), Arnold (1975) have special bearing on this study, especially in dealing with technological processes and utilizing oral traditions.

Here ethnoarchaeological methods were used to:

- (i) look at aspects of the settlement patterns, diet, economy and technology (with emphasis on a facet of technology - pottery) of the present inhabitants of the Anambra valley in order to

better understand and interpret the archaeological features and artifacts there.

- (ii) look critically at oral traditions with a view to postulating hypotheses which could be tested by the archaeological data and be used in choosing sites for survey or excavation.

As has been shown in Part I the historical evidence suggests direct continuity between the past and present inhabitants of the parts of Igboland and Igalaland being studied. The works of Jeffreys (1934, 1956); Boston (1960, 1962, 1968); Daniels (1966); Shaw (1970); Shelton (1971); and Onwuejeogwu (1974a, 1974b) suggest that these parts have been occupied by the present groups from at least the 13th century AD. Ethnographic and archaeological data on the pottery industry has therefore been collected from areas that are geographically contiguous - Aguleri, Igbo - Ukwu, Ogurugu, and Idah; studied to see the elements of similarity in terms of form, decoration and techniques of manufacture, thereby commenting on the continuity in pottery technology from at least the 13th century AD.

#### Methods of Ethnographic data collection

A special study was made of ethnographic data relating to potting traditions. Visits were made to various pottery manufacturing centres in relevant parts of Igboland and Igalaland and pottery making processes were observed. Data were also collected from the areas of research (Igbo - Ukwu, Idah and Ogurugu) which are non-potting centres. In studying present day pottery, features taken note of included the manufacturing techniques, the forms, the decorative and other stylistic features, and information was obtained with regards to pottery functions. Apart from pottery, information was also obtained of iron smelting/smithing, farming, hunting, fishing and trading and of aspects of settlement patterns including house types.

#### The collecting of oral traditional data

Although scholars like Bohannan (1953), Jones (1965), Jones (1970) and Henige (1971, 1973, 1974) have questioned the validity of oral tradition specifically as a source of chronology and generally as a source of history. Others like Vansina (*op. cit.*, 1960, 1965, 1978), Alagoa (1966a, 1966b, 1972), Afigbo (1966), Onwuejeogwu (*op. cit.*), Spear (1974, 1981), Reece (1977), and Twaddle (1975) have demonstrated that oral traditions can be trustworthy but that we must be cautious in handling oral traditions especially those dealing with the origins of peoples. Traditions of origin more often than not refer to important historical events in the life of a people or peoples (events which might have involved the movements of such a people or peoples from one place to another - see Reece *op.cit.*: 183-205; Spear 1974: 67 - 84; Afigbo 1979; Ikime 1979). But the nature of such historical events can only be deciphered by a critical but cautious study of the oral traditions. As Alagoa (1979) rightly puts it :

"traditions of origin like other forms of oral traditions, represent merely the raw materials for the use of the historian, and not history in its final form.

A pre-requisite of proper oral tradition - collecting is "a sound

knowledge of the people's societal set-up, a knowledge only possible through detailed ethnographic studies" (Andah and Okpoko in press; also see Onwuejeogwu *op.cit.*: 45, Alagoa 1972: 6; Doward 1974: 457). This has been discussed at some length in Part 1 and even though I did not carry out a detailed study of the societal set-up in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah interviews were arranged and conducted with its significance for the archaeological work in mind.

In Aguleri titled holders, elders and representatives of various compounds are very significant in the socio-political organisation of their town. Therefore, in Aguleri I collected information from all the communities forming the town. In these communities I collected information from the ozo title holders, priests, farmers and hunters knowledgeable in the history and geography of the area. I was conducted round Aguleri by Mr. Ike Manafa, a local historian. In Idah the overall ruler, Aata, or anybody commissioned by him is seen as the repository of the Igala traditions while in Ogurugu, the chief and leaders of the various quarters are the repositories of Ogurugu history. In Idah I collected information from the Ata of Igala (Alhaji Aliyu Obaje), members of his council (including Chief Imodi, the Odekina Ata), and was conducted round Idah and neighbouring areas by the Odekina Ata and Alhaji Aduku Idoko (a councillor). In Ogurugu I obtained information from the chief and members of his council and from each leader of the various quarters forming the town. I was conducted round Ogurugu and its abandoned settlements by Okono Tagbo (son of the chief of Ogurugu), Boniface Chukwurah (Chairman, Local Schools Board), and Chukwuemekan Ogbali (a councillor). From the various versions of oral traditions collected from Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah I was able to see hypotheses generated by these oral traditions which could be tested with the archaeological data. In other parts of sub-saharan Africa (for example, Van der Merwe and Scully 1971, Anozie (1976) Onwuejeogwu 1976, 1977; Effah-Gyanff 1978; Schmidt 1975, Okpoko in press), these traditions have proved useful in the location and choice of sites for study and in the interpretation of such sites, artifacts and features.

#### The collection of Linguistic data

This has been discussed in Part 1 and generated two hypotheses one of which I was able to test with the archaeological data available.

#### d) Collection of Archaeological data

Two levels of archaeological data were made use of; the first level relates to archaeological work done in the areas of study prior to the present research, and the second level relates to archaeological surveys and excavations undertaken by one at Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah from 1976 - 81 to test hypotheses derived from the oral traditional, linguistic and ethnographic data.

#### The Analysis of the Archaeological finds

Two levels of analyses were undertaken; general analysis of stratigraphies to define the relative sequence of the cultural materials, and the analysis of specific categories like pottery, smoking pipes, animal bones etc. In studying these cultural materials, relevant ethnographic information was made use of. For example in studying the pottery the

features taken note of included the manufacturing techniques, the forms, decorations and inferences with regards to functions. The criteria used in the study of the smoking pipes were morphological and aesthetic - bowl, stem, base, decoration and angle and maker's marks. Animal bones were studied to identify the types of animals present in the past in the areas of study with a view to determining character of the subsistence, economies and where possible identifying animals introduced from Igala to Igbo areas or vice versa.

Dating, other than by stratigraphy was by radio carbon dating; some relative dates were obtained from the smoking pipes.

#### The timetable of the field research

Fieldwork started in December 1976 when Prof. Andah and I carried out an archaeological survey on Nri. In that same month I visited Igbo-Ukwu to see the excavated areas and collect ethnographic information relevant to the Igbo-Ukwu finds. In March/April 1977, Dr. Anozie and I carried out the excavation at Umuekete (Aguleri). During this period we also visited sites located by Dr. Anozie at Aguleri. From September to October 1977, Dr. Anozie, Dr. Nzewunwa and I carried out an archaeological survey of parts of the Anambra valley - these include Ogurugu, Umueje and Ifite-Ogwari. In January/February 1980 I carried out another archaeological survey of Ogurugu. In that same period with the help of Dr. Anozie an archaeological survey of Idah was undertaken. In February/March 1980 I excavated parts of the Oketekakini (Idah) and Atida (Ogurugu) mounds. In September 1981 I carried out another excavation at Ogurugu on the Obatamu mounds. During these periods I also collected relevant oral traditional and ethnographic data. Studies of the potting traditions at Inyi, Owerre-Ezukala, Ojor and Igga were done in December 1977 and March 1978 while the study of Nkpologu potting traditions was done in March 1981.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO THE ANAMBRA VALLEY

As set out in a wider context in Part 1, the Anambra valley is occupied by Igbo and Igala speaking peoples of 7 main centres. Aguleri, presently occupied by the Igbo speaking people, is on latitude 6° 20N and longitude 6° 51 E and is in the Anambra Local Government Area of Anambra State; Ogurugu (latitude 6° 44 N and longitude 6° 55 E ) in the Uzo-uwani Local Government Area of Anambra State is presently occupied by Igala-speaking people, Idah (the seat of the Igala king) is on latitude 7° 05 N and longitude 6° 43 E and is in the Idah Local Government Area of Benue State (Fig. 1).

#### The geomorphology of the Anambra valley

The Anambra basin is part of the Niger sedimentary basin. This basin resulted from tectonic movements that occurred prior to the Cretaceous Orajaka 1975: 5; Kogbe 1975: 237-357 and was filled with a series of transgressive and regressive sediments, largely sandstones, shales and clays, during the Cretaceous Ofomata 1975:8. These sediments subsequently underwent uplift and folding; then erosion and as a result other presently existing landscape features in the former Onitsha, Owerri and Benue provinces were formed (Simpson 1954:4). The present day plain which is the dominant feature in south-eastern Nigeria has a gently rolling topography generally about 122 metres above sea-level. This resulted from alternating denudational and aggradational activities.

The Anambra itself (Figs 1 & 2a) whose headwaters are in Benue State, is approximately 230 kilometres long from its source in the false bedded sand-stone formations of Ankpa (Wigwe 1975:10). It flows south then west for almost 120 kilometres before it is joined by the Okulu and at Ogurugu by the Ofu. From Ogurugu the Anambra flows into the Niger in a series of meander of varying lengths over a lowland plain roughly 120 metres above sea-level which is completely flooded for most of the rainy season.

The river Niger also overflows its banks in the rainy season, the flood from both rivers helping to provide rich soils for agriculture in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah. As correctly noted by Ofomata 1975:41-42, the soils of the Anambra valley are basically young, derived from recently deposited alluvium. They range from pale brown loamy to immature young soils which are not intensively cultivated. The loamy soils have a crumbly structure and high humus content and are more fertile consequently. Alluvial soils are specially favoured in some areas for growing coco-yam and large yams (Grove 1951:5).

#### Temperature and rainfall

Mean annual temperature in the basin ranges between 26° - 28° . The hottest months of the year are February, March and April with temperature dropping in December and January due to the harmattan winds. Annual

rainfall ranges from 1600-2000 mm with the rainy season lasting from April to October, though briefly interrupted by a dry spell in August. The dry season lasts from November to March. The pattern of rainfall, controlled by the movement of the sun, has not been consistent through the years. In some years the rains or even the "little" dry season may be prologned while in other years the rains do not start when they are supposed to. These variations may adversely affect peasant farming in such areas as Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah where the crop calendar for clearing land, planting and harvesting crops is directly controlled by the rainfall pattern. Crop failure may occur if there is any interruption or change in the anticipated rainfall pattern.

The little dry season in August is associated with an inversion in the tropical maritime airmass. However, humidity remains high (Monanu 1975:25).

### Vegetation

Two principal vegetation bands are present - the fresh-water swamp-forest directly along the rivers and streams; and woodland savannah with predominantly tall, coarse grasses, flanking the forests. The swampy terrain, characterised by very wet soils, are very rich in tree species and herbs. The woodland savannah zone is mainly characterised by a few trees including oil palm trees, fan palms, silk cotton trees and some grasses, the most dominant of which are Imperata cylindrica (spear grass) and Pennisetum purpureum (elephant grass).

### Food resources

Monkeys, baboons, elephants, buffaloes and snakes thrive in the swamp forest while antelopes, grass cutters (cane rats), squirrels, leopards, wild cats, mice inhabit the savannah. Domestic animals such as cattle, goats, sheep, dogs and fowls thrive in both areas.

With regards to domesticated plants Aguleri and Ogurugu are the major sources of supply and distribution of yams to neighbouring peoples mainly Dioscorea alata (ji abana), D. rotundata (ji ocha), D. Cayensis (ji ayogbe), D. dumetorum (ona). Other crops extensively cultivated are cassava and rice. Millet is extensively cultivated in Idah. Plants cultivated on a small scale in the area include plantain, banana, maize and pineapple. Also available in the areas are oranges, pawpaw and kola-nut. Wild plants protected for exploitation include raffia palm (Raphia vinifera) and oil palm (Elaeis guineensis) and trees like Newbouldia laevis (ogilisi) and Detarium elastica (ofo) found in Aguleri are of ritual importance. Newbouldia laevis is sacred, often planted in groves in front of shrines and their leaves are used for sacrifices; sometimes they are used as boundary markers. Some of the above mentioned plants and animals must have been long exploited. But how far back in time is not yet known because, as with many other parts of West Africa, the beginnings of food production are yet to be clarified. However, with regards to the Anambra valley, studies by Onwuejeogwu (1972, 1974a) and Gray (1962:184), of oral and ethnographic information suggest that yam cultivation in the Anambra valley is of some antiquity. For example, Onwuejeogwu suggests that Igbo cultural traits associated with the beginnings of yam cultivation and a yam festival were in northwest Igboland on the Anambra river, on the northern forest margins.

Gray is of the opinion that the grassland fringe found here indicates early agricultural clearings. The oral traditions (Henderson 1972:60-61) offer glimpses as to how cultivation of yam and coco-yam began in Aguleri and their probable spread to other parts of Igboland. Oral information suggests that in pre-European times title-taking in Aguleri and Ogurugu was dependent on the number of lines of yams available in a man's barn. Also the people of both areas have good knowledge of cultivation and preservation of yam. For example, large eating yams are cultivated in heaps, while seed yams are cultivated in ridges. Yams are well-preserved in barns suitably constructed for the purpose. And as in many Igbo areas the people of Aguleri have respect for Ifejioku spirit (deified yam spirit).

Various plants/trees provide the inhabitants of Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah with firewood and materials for roofing their houses. For instance, the stem of date palm (Phoenix dactylifera), spear and elephant grasses are used for thatch. Some herbs were important in the past for medicinal purposes. For example in Umuekete village (Aguleri) plant species whose uses the people still know include:

- (i) Olax sp. (osu-aja) - said to be useful for the cure of snake bites.
- (ii) Crinum sp. (ulede or olodu) - mainly used by the local doctors (dibia) for "ochi" - a process in which impure blood is sucked out of the body to relieve it of pains.
- (iii) Cissus sp. (elim-utara) - known as (okoho) in Igala language and in Nsukka area; a climbing tree, the stem is used in preparing a type of gummy soup.
- (iv) Ochna sp. (nwanyi-Ocha) - the leaves are useful for the cure of malaria.
- (v) Annona senegalensis (mbu-mbu) whose leaves could be used in preparing a purgative drug and the bark for malaria medicine. The fruits could also be eaten.
- (vi) Rubiaceous plant (elimejuna or olanjune) used locally to treat any open wound.

### Clay

Clay for making pots, bricks and other ceramic items are found generally on banks of rivers or in the flood valleys or on slopes of hills. The potting tradition is now on the decline and in Aguleri for example. The few women who have knowledge of potting are very old and are no longer willing to make pots. The younger women are not interested in such an occupation because it is regarded now as being tedious and no longer lucrative. At Ogurugu and Idah despite the presence of suitable clay, oral information maintains that in the past the people got their pottery products from their neighbours; this is still the practice today.

### Land and water routes

Communications in the region include various overland routes running through Nsukka-Udi highland north-westward into the Igala country and water

borne contact along the river Niger and its tributary, the Anambra river. These have been discussed in Part 1.

## THE IGBO AND IGALA PEOPLES

### The Igbo

A general discussion of these peoples has been given in Part 1. Here only points specific to the Anambra Basin will be included. All Igbo groups possess a common language (Fig. 2d) although with dialect differences. But

most linguists agree that there are consonants in all the dialects and that/... these consonants make the Igbo language a recognizable linguistic whole understood by anyone who grows up within any Igbo-speech community or who undertakes a study the language (Ebeogu 1980: 67-68).

According to Armstrong (1967: 4-5) one of the very striking unifying factors in Igbo language is "the extraordinary stability of tone through the whole range of the dialects".

Apart from the language factor, patrilineality and agnation are well defined in most villages and residence is normally patrilocal. But in some Nsukka villages where Igala lineages were founded the Igbo reckon descent overtly through the male line (father's agnates) but covertly through the line of mother's father (EGO's Ikwunne or mother's umunna) in order to maintain Igbo control over Igbo gods and persons (Shelton 1971:33). In Afikpo there is the double unilineal descent or double descent system which stresses ties through the mother as well as the father, in both cases in limited ways (Ottenberg 1968:3). In such an area partilineal and matrilineal land holdings exist since individuals (both males and females) reckon descent through males by way of their mother forming uterine ties which are quite distinct from the agnatic ones (Ottenberg 1968: 4-5). Generally speaking, however, the Igbo live in patrilineages called umunna.

Umunna which literally means "children of the father" connotes biological and sociological relationships. Ikwunne on the other hand literally means "relations of mother" (see Ebeogu 1980: 37-47 who (op.cit. 39) has pointed out that

in both the purely patrilineal and double kinship systems of the Igbo society, the interplay of the paternal and maternal elements is responsible for the stability in the Igbo social system.

The typical Igbo household is made up of a man and his wife or wives, his unmarried children and his married sons and their wives and children. The wife/wives co-operates/co-operate with the man in the upbringing of their children but decision-taking lies ultimately with the man who controls the affairs of the house.

A number of households form a compound (obu) and closely related

compounds form a lineage (umunna) while related lineages form a village (ogbe) and a number of villages federate to form a town (obodo). Uchendu (1965:40) rightly points out that it is in the compound that traditional authority mainly lies. The compound head has numerous ritual, moral and legal rights and obligations and all householders and their dependents recognise his authority and will not make any major political decision without first consulting him. He offers sacrifices for members of his compound, settles disputes between a husband and his wife/wives and confers names on any child born in his compound. He also represents his compound in all external affairs - affairs dealing with other compounds.

At a higher level it is the lineage head who acts as intermediary between the lineage and the ancestors. He is a compound head but may be the oldest member of the lineage. He plays ritual and priestly functions for his lineage, sacrificing to the earth deity (Ani or Ala) on its behalf. He has no political authority - he only presides over meetings of the lineage but cannot punish or interfere in the internal affairs of the component units forming the lineage. His symbol of authority is the club-like ofo made from the branch of Detarium elastica.

At the village level there is no village-head. Every adult male participates in running the affairs of the village. However, leadership is provided by ofo-holders and titled men.

Affairs of groups of villages are run by representatives from the villages selected at each occasion depending on their ability to represent their villages. In the village-group assembly every village has equal voice and no decision of the assembly is binding on a village which is not represented or which disagrees with others. However, most villages tend to co-operate with one another.

The settlement pattern in various parts of Igboland reflects directly the relation between territorial and social organisation (Udo 1964:134). Structurally, the village is divided along the lines of component lineages; boundaries of the land being defined by such things as traditions of ownership or by trees such as ogilisi (Newbouldia laevis), palms etc. Within the land of a lineage each compound has a share meant for the various households forming the compound. Indeed in most parts of Igbo areas villages are not overcrowded. There is space enough for each family (household) to have its own house, compound and at times farm at close quarters. In the area selected for detailed study (Aguleri), the settlement pattern is that of compact villages while in most parts of northern Igboland the dispersed compound villages prevail. For example, in Nri, Igbo - Nkwu, Ezira etc. the villages consist of dispersed compounds. Each compound is enclosed with a mud wall of about 1.5m high covered with palm frond to prevent rainwash. In the modern period such a wall is built with cement blocks. In most cases each compound has attached land for planting yams, cocoyams and vegetables. Outside the settlement area open tracts of farmland and patches of shrubs predominate.

Aguleri consists of individual mud houses - some of single rooms. The houses are built very closely together so that there is just a walking space between them. A family unit (a man, wife/wives and their children) has two or more houses depending on the number of wives and the man's house (often the biggest) is flanked on one side by those of his wives. The males live

together in their father's house while the females live together in their mother's.

The houses of relatives are built near one another and the separation of the houses of one lineage group (umunna) from another is hardly noticeable. However, features like farmlands, woodland and open spaces separate villages from one another.

Immediately prior to European advent and subsequent influence the people of Aguleri lived in houses, some of which were round, but most were rectangular at their base. These houses had respectively round or rectangular grass roofs and no windows. Cooking was done in front of any of the houses, but a family unit may build a small house with half walls in front for this purpose. Refuse is thrown anywhere outside the compound.

On both sides of the banks of river Anambra, as for example at Umuezeanam, opposite Aguleri, houses are built on raised platforms or on long and thick wooden piles about two metres high. These prevent water from entering the houses during rainy seasons.

The principal occupations of the Igbo here are agriculture, trading, smithing, potting and textile manufacture (see Part 1).

### The Igala

The Igala inhabit an area south of the Benue river and east of the Niger and share common boundaries with the Igbo along the Anambra river as far south as Ogurugu.

The Igala people like the Igbo, comprise several groups whose social organisation and value systems are generally similar. Unlike a majority of Igbo groups, however, the Igala recognise one paramount king - Ata (literally father) - based at Idah, as their political ruler (Shelton 1971:17). Thus among the unifying factors, Igala-speaking people have a common language, (Fig.2d) and a common political concept. The Igala language has several dialects but Silverstein (1973:xii) maintains that there are a few essential differences between them and communication is not impaired.

#### Unlike the Igbo

the Igala are more concerned with notions of rank and hierarchy than with notions of individual achievement in a competitive society ... titles are associated with hereditary differences in rank (Boston 1977:13).

In Igalaland a number of sibling groups form lineages and related lineages form clans (Part 1) and clan organisation and territorial community form the bases of Igala social and political organisation. The clan system existed in its own right as a framework within which political authority was delegated permanently among clans of different orders; (Boston 1968: 28 and 125). The royal clans being the largest and most complex.

Among the other non-royal clans the most senior member of the upper most age-group becomes the ogujo olopu or ritual elder. When he dies the next in age takes over the affairs of the clan. The authority of the ogujo

olopu is ritual and moral in character. The office of ogujo olopu is limited administratively by the fact that Igala clans tend to be widely dispersed beyond their original centres and also because of the existence of other offices in which the external leadership of the clan is vested.

However, the basic unit of settlement is the hamlet (aja); it is a self-contained community which in most cases are made up of kinsmen who are related to one another either by birth or by marriage. In a hamlet houses are grouped around the compound of the founder but the house of the affins are further away from the centre than those of the founder's sons and agnatic relatives. The founder's sons and his agnatic relatives occupy a higher social position in the hamlet than the group of affins. Even within the group of blood kinsmen, the smaller group which really controls the social and economic life of the hamlet is made of agnatic kinsmen who descended from the founder or are related to him patrilineally.

Mainly for economic purposes hamlets group loosely together into a village (ewo). Members of each hamlet obtain land through the village-group because the right to apportion land is delegated to the head of senior hamlet in each village by the clan that holds sovereign rights over land in each district. Hamlets accept village control over such resources as water, market, paths, farmland and woodland.

The head of the senior hamlet becomes head of the village (onu ewo). He performs some administrative functions. He is responsible for the collection of tributes and tries to maintain law and order in the village. But it is with the hamlet head the real authority in administrative matters lies. The village head governs only with the consent of the hamlet heads and he has no power to implement decisions in the hamlet for which the elders do not give their support. Any attempt by the village head to overstep his authority will be looked upon by members of the village as oppression and may "lead in the long run to depopulation of the village through emigration" (Boston op. cit: 148).

Village groups are brought together into districts with an onu ane (chief of land) as the administrative and political head. The Onu ane is responsible to the central government for the maintenance of law and order in his district and he acts as a major witness in any dispute sent to the provincial court or court at Idah for settlement. The onu ane's duties are also religious and ritualistic; he looks after the ritual welfare of whole members of his district.

Districts are grouped together into provinces under the control of Ata's representatives - Ata'a councillors. They act as intermediaries between the localities and the central government in judicial, political and other matters.

In a typical Anambra Basin hamlet the compound of the founder is the biggest and placed in a central position. To some extent the entire network of paths and buildings that make up the hamlet is co-ordinated by the main axes of this primary homestead (Boston op. cit: 129).

Houses are nearly all round with conical thatched roofs (comparable with houses at Umuekete village in Aguleri). Their roof-bears rest not directly on the mud walls but usually on a ring of vertical posts which stand just outside or are sometimes embedded in it. Compounds are not usually walled rather they consist of houses built together around open

spaces (compact settlement as in Aguleri). The houses usually contain a single room each but sometimes a small space is partitioned off for a store or sleeping room. The only admission of light and air into the house is by a small door way (see Armstrong 1955: 86).

The main occupations of the Igala are farming, trading, hunting, fishing, iron working and weaving (Part 1).

#### IGBO - IGALA CONTACTS IN THE ANAMBRA VALLEY

Ethnographic, linguistic and historical (including oral traditional) information suggest that the Igbo and the Igala of the Anambra valley had been in contact and interacting with one another from the very early periods of their histories.

#### Ethnographic information

At least from pre-colonial times the people of Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah have been predominantly agricultural, though trading had always been important. The people cultivate many crops especially yam which is prominent in their diet (see the section of food resources). They practise shifting cultivation with the help of hoes and cutlasses, planting yams in the best land available. A piece of land is cultivated twice consecutively and allowed a four or two year fallow period (depending on the richness of the soil) before it is recultivated. Open patches within settlements are farmed. In such gardens crop rotation is practised.

The people of Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah also hunt and fish. A good number of them engage in fishing mostly on part-time basis and fish are collected both for commercial purposes and domestic consumption. Wooden spears, traps of different types and sizes (including nets) and hooks are the rudimentary implements used for fishing and fishing is also done from canoes in these areas.

Although fishing is done by both men and women, hunting is exclusively a man's activity in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah. Up till present times bows and arrows and traps are still used for hunting. Traps of different types - fence and bait traps, rope-traps etc. are more effective instruments of hunting than clubs, bows and arrows while locally made and factory guns are the most effective. Also dogs are used for hunting.

The people of Ogurugu and Idah do not seem to have manufactured pots from the recent past. But studies of the potting tradition in selected Igbo areas (Inyi, Owerre-Ezukala - which have trading links with Igbo-Ukwu and Aguleri within the Anambra valley) and Igala areas (Ojkor, Igga and Nkpologu) show that despite minor variations there are strong elements of similarities in the actual manufacturing techniques, types of decorations and forms of pots in these areas (see relevant section in chapter Four).

Oral information maintains that iron smelting has been of some antiquity at Idah (Alhaji Aliyu Obaje, Ata of Igala, Mrach 1981: personal communication). The people of Aguleri claim to have got itinerant smelters/smiths from Awka (40km east of Aguleri) who smelted iron and produced iron implements for them (Manafa and some Aguleri elders March 1981: personal communication). At Ogurugu there is no tradition of iron

smelting but smithing appears to have been going on here up to recent times (Chief Tagbo Ukwella Sept. 1981: personal communication). At both Aguleri and Idah iron smelting seem to have died off with the importation of iron from Europe. Weaving of cloth seems also to have died off in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah with the importation of clothing materials.

Following his studies of the distribution pattern of the ceremonial gongs and ikenga's figures (symbol of the spirit cult which emphasizes individual achievement as against ascribed status) Boston (1964:46) noted that the ceremonial gongs in Igbo and Igala areas "are similar in construction and that their "dimensions are roughly the same". He was however, of the opinion that one cannot speak of a standard shape for either the Igbo or Igala gongs. He (Boston 1977) also observed similarities between the ikenga figures in Igbo territory and those of neighbouring Edo and Igala peoples. In the three areas the ikenga or okega (Igala) is represented by a carving or casting as in some cases among the Edo. But the distinctive feature of the ikenga in all the areas is that it is generally horned.

According to Boston (1977:2-3) the main distribution of the okega figures in Igala areas was the Ibaji district which was between Idah and the border with the Igbo to the south. However, he found a few examples at Idah and nearby villages.

The Ifejioku cult (prominent in Igbo areas) and Igbo symbol of authority ofo are also present in southern Igala communities (for example, Ogurugu and Ibaji) but absent in central Igala areas. Age grade associations which characterize the Igbo special organisation have been adopted in Ogurugu and Ibaji areas. Also found in Ogurugu and Ibaji areas are Igbo masquerades with "prominent head-dresses and with buffalo horns and numerous symbolic carved objects" (see Oguagha op. cit.: 222-262).

Many towns and villages in Nsukka area have traditions which suggest that their kingship institution was derived from Idah. This is also evident in the form of administrative titles found in Nsukka area (titles collectively known as the Ama titles). Some Igbo towns, like Nsukka, Eha Alumona and Enugu Ezike, "adapted the Igala concept of local government". In such towns the "earth priest was also the secular head like the onu ane in Igala kingdom" (Oguagha op. cit.: 229). Also the Egungu cult associated with the Igala Egu festival ("celebrated in commemoration of the ancestors at the beginning of the yam harvest" feature in some Igbo towns like Onitsha, Osomari, Illah, Odekpe and Onitsha (Oguagha op. cit.: 230).

It has been suggested that the horizontal narrow loom and the vertical broad loom (both used for weaving) found in Nsukka areas were probably introduced by the Igala and Idoma peoples (see Oguagha op. cit.: 247).

In Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah the settlement pattern is of compact type. Houses are built together (not usually walled round) and separated from those of the neighbouring villages/quarters by tracks of intervening woodland or farmland. In Idah houses are nearly all round with conical thatched roofs (comparable with houses at Umuekete village in Aguleri); while in Aguleri and Ogurugu some of the houses are round but most are rectangular (feature typical of houses in Igbo areas). These houses have four cornered or round grass roofs. In the three areas the houses have no windows. The only admission of light and air into any of the houses is by a

small door way.

Thus we can observe elements of similarities in the house types, subsistence activities, social organisations and aspects of technology (arts and crafts) of the Igbo and Igala peoples inhabiting the Anambra valley. Some of these similarities may result from the fact that different peoples responded in a similar vein to similar environmental conditions while others may be due to interactions between these two groups of people through time.

This last hypothesis was tested by the archaeological data.

### Linguistics information

Linguists like Armstrong (1964, 1965) and Hoffman (1978: personal communication) suggest that Igala and Igbo languages diverged from Proto-Kwa thousands of years ago. Using the method of glottochronology to get some idea of absolute times, Armstrong comes up with separation periods of 4,000 to 6,000 years between Yoruba and Igbo (Armstrong 1964:12) and 2,000 between Igala and Yoruba (Armstrong *op. cit.*). Since Igala is more closely 'related' to Yoruba (Armstrong 1965) and probably diverged from Yoruba after Igbo and Yoruba diverged from each other the separation period between Igbo and Igala could be estimated to somewhere between 4,000 and 6,000 years also. But the use of glottochronology for absolute dating is highly questionable. Various opinions are held as to the validity of the method. Although the differing schools of thought regarding glottochronology do not concern us here, these dates appear to give us an idea of relative separation periods of the above languages. It would have been interesting to see how independent archaeological investigation of Igbo-Igala relationship compares with such glottochronological postulation. While this is beyond the scope of this study it constitutes a viable topic for yet another study perhaps of this kind.

There are similarities between the Igbo and Igala languages which may be due to genetic relationship (Hoffman 1978: personal communication).

For example,

<u>Igala</u>	<u>Igbo</u>
éwo (goat)	éwu (goat)

This item in both languages still retains some features which make it recognisable as coming from the same source (Hoffan 1978: personal communication). Furthermore, in his study of the Igala language Silverstein (1973:1) maintains that the Ibaji dialect spoken in the southwest corner of the Igala area and the Adoru dialect spoken in the southwest corner of the Igala area have Igbo linguistic influences while Ebu has a western Igbo linguistic influence.

There are similarities also between the Igbo and Igala words for market days which clearly indicate long trading contact:

<u>Igbo</u>	<u>Igala</u>
Eke (first day of the market week)	Eke (fourth day of market week)
Oye	Ede
Afo	Afo
Nkwo	Ukwo

(see Shelton 1971: 261

Some Igbo people in the Igbo - Igala borderland (for example, Nsukka areas) bear Igala names like Onoja, Oboli, Asama, Ogbedo, Ameh, Ajogu Nad Ojoma while some Igala of the southern communities (for example, Ogurugu and Ibaji) bear Igbo names like Okolo, Igbokwe, Tagbo, Igwedimma and Chukwurah. Apart from this, many southern Igala communities (for example, Ogurugu, Igga, Ojor, Asaba and Ibaji) are bilingual in Igbo and Igala languages and Igbo serves as a second language in these areas (also see Oguagha *op. cit.*: 248, 251 and 258). Both in Igala and Igbo languages the work okpe or ekpe is used to refer to defensive walls or earth-works while two towns - one near Idah and the other in Nsukka area - have a common name (Nkpologu). Moreover, many Nsukka towns have some people of Igala ancestry (Meek 1930: 3-126). According to Shelton (1971:xii) the conquest of Nsukka by the Igala resulted "in definite substitution of the Igbo shrine priests by Igala attama (also see pages 13 - 14, 121 - 122, 159 - 162, 233 - 234).

The linguistic information suggests:

(i) that Igbo - Igala relationship may date from the very early periods of their histories;

(ii) contacts between the Igbo and the Igala in the more recent times. This latter hypothesis has been tested here archaeologically.

### Oral Traditions

While Part I dealt with the history and oral traditions of all Igbo communities which have had relationships with the Igala (for example, Onitsha, Illah, Osomari, Ebu etc) in this part a more detailed study of oral traditions that pertain to the history of the Igbo and Igala peoples in the Anambra river valley is done. The Anambra connection with the Igala kingdom is contained especially in the traditions of a group of related villages that form a clan known as Umueri. The Umueri settled in two sections roughly midway between Onitsha and Awka, the northern section centred on Aguleri, on the left bank of the river Anambra, and the southern section at Nri some 46 kilometres east of Aguleri. The towns form the northern group are Aguleri, Nteje, Amanuke and Igbariam; and the southern comprises Nri and Oreri (Boston 1960:54). These towns form a group whose elders calim a common origin and the same ancestor (Jeffreys 1934:14). The two versions of the tradition are discussed in Part II.

Using the principles of generational interval (interval between the birth of a father and the birth of his first surviving son), Nri age-grade

system and Nri king list, Onwuejeogwu (*op. cit.*: 6-54) worked out a time - chart for Nri history. He places the Nri period at Aguleri in the Anambra valley as from about AD 948 - 1041. There are many short comings in this method of dating but it may give us an idea of the time depth of Nri culture history and the tradition suggests some forms of interaction between the Igbo and Igala people within the Anambra valley from early periods in their histories.

According to Boston (1960:55) the Igala on their part do not claim any genetic relationship with the Umueri towns, but their traditions suggest that they have had long historical connection with the Igbo. It was pointed out in Part I, that the origin legends of present day Igala kingship tend to fall into two categories, one centering upon founders of noble birth and the other upon founders who are said to have been hunters by profession. Igala traditions point to a war hero - Onoja Oboni - as the founder of the kingship system in Ogurugu - an Igala town by the bank of the Anambra river. Part II

Interviews conducted by me in September 1977 and February 1980 with Chief Tagbo Ukwella, his councillors and some Ogurugu elders point to Onoja Oboni as the illegitimate son of Obatamu (an Igbo hunter) from his union with Oboni, an Idah woman. From a base at Ogurugu he raided the Igbo border country from the Nsukka escarpment to the Niger. The situation of his base, coupled with the strong tradition that Oboni conquered the town of Asaba and Igala trading settlements along the Niger - near Onitsha, makes connections between his activities and the Igbo settlement at Aguleri most probable (Boston *op. cit.*: see Seton *op. cit.* and Meek *op. cit.*). However, the walls around Ogurugu and some settlements of the Anambra valley suggest a period or periods of raiding in the Anambra valley, conflicts in which the Igbo and Igala might have participated.

#### Archaeological information from the Anambra Valley

On the Nsukka campus of the University of Nigeria, Hartle (1966:4) located remains of a fortified site presently consisting of almost a circular earthen wall about 200 metres in diameter. Hartle (1967:136) was of the opinion that it was one of eleven forts between Unadu and Ogurugu which were used by the Igala as slave pens. Shelton (*op. cit.*: 23) was informed that this fort is called Okpe'garra (the Igala wall) and that it was occupied by the people from Idah a long time ago. He was of the opinion that the conquest of Nsukka by the Igala took place well before the 1850's.

Shaw in 1959-60 and 1964 excavated three sites at Igbo-Ukwu. They are "a store house of regalia" (Igbo Isaiah), a burial chamber/shrine and an ancient cistern (Igbo Richard) and the pits (Igbo Jonah). The "store house" was full of ritual bronze vessels and regalia while bronze objects and many beads were recovered from the burial chamber/shrine, the ancient cistern and the pits. Potsherds were recovered from the three excavations.

There is still an unresolved problem in interpreting the Igbo-Ukwu finds. This is because they are isolated geographically, stylistically and in time. For instance, apart from Ezira, about 20km north of Igbo-Ukwu, with bronzes dated to 15th century AD by Hartle there is no other site in south-eastern Nigeria with material similar to those from Igbo-Ukwu. And in the whole of southern Nigeria there is no other site with evidence of bronze technology dating back to 9th century AD. The earliest being at Benin 13th

to 14th century AD, and at Ife 12th century AD.

Although the technique of manufacture of Igbo-Ukwu, Benin and Ife bronze objects is similar the raw materials and art styles show some differences: whereas the Igbo-Ukwu bronzes are a mixture of lead, tin and copper those of Benin and Ife are a mixture of tin, zinc and copper and strictly speaking should be referred to as brass; the decorative motifs on the Igbo-Ukwu bronze objects are quite distinctive and different from those of Ife and Benin.

Shaw (1969:45; 1970: 268-271) associated the Igbo-Ukwu finds with the Eze Nri, kings of Umueri group of the Igbo, and the site is very close to Orieri, the only place with Agukwu to have a king with this rite. Shaw was (1970:284-5) of the opinion that Igbo-Ukwu was linked to the trans-saharan trading net-work as far back as 9th century AD. He suggests that the wealth exhibited at Igbo-Ukwu was based on the export of ivory, slaves and kola-nuts to the north and in return copper and other necessities for bronze casting, beads and probably cloth were received. Afigbo (1971: 205-18) agreeing with Shaw, has expressed the view that by the 9th century A.D. a large portion of Igboland was already the scene of highly artistic culture - a culture which derived this sustenance from an economy based partly on food production and partly on wide ranging commercial contacts. Posnansky (1973a: 309-11, 1973b: 1-14) and Lawal (1972a: 72-97 1972b: 313-21) 1973: 1-8) questioned the involvement of the Igbo-Ukwu in trans-saharan trade as far back as 9th century A.D. when there is no evidence anywhere else in West Africa for such a long distance trade at that time. Posnansky would have preferred a 12th to 15th century A.D. date because at this period there is other evidence for such trade between southern Nigeria and North Africa.

The Onwuejeogwus (1976, 1977: 169-188) who saw nothing wrong with the 9th century A.D. dates have suggested relatively local sources (Abakaliki-Afikpo and Calabar areas) for the raw materials used in the manufacture of the bronze objects. In a recent review Umueji and Chikwendu 1983 (in press) support them. If this were indeed the case there is still the need to determine how far back in time the exploitation of copper, tin and lead began in Abakaliki-Afikpo and Calabar areas; as well as to what extent these raw materials were exploited.

There is the need to have more excavated sites and dates in Igbo-Ukwu and related areas like Nri, Orieri and Aguleri (Okpoko in press).

If the presence of such materials as copper, glass and bronze indicate far-ranging commercial contacts probable pattern of such trade would involve numerous intermediaries between the source of commodities and their destinations. It is likely that trading activities between the Igbo and the north most probably passed through the Anambra valley (especially through Aguleri and Ogurugu) and the Igala country. The portrayal of a horse amongst the Igbo-Ukwu bronze objects points according to Shaw (1970: 262) to northern connections. How horses were introduced into the Lower Niger Basin discussed in Part I. Other northern connections are the calabash handle of copper comparable to that of the ritual calabashes from Idah - (Shaw *op. cit.* Part II plates 242-251) and the bronze pectoral masks presently worn by Eze Nri of Orieri and Ata of Igala which suggest interactions between the Igbo and the Igala in the past. Crowther (1962:52-3; also see Shaw *op. cit.*: 258) also suggests that the technical skill which produced the Igbo-Ukwu castings were derived from Idah. This is very debatable, however.

In Idah, the excavation of the Ojuwo Ata Ogu mound by Daniels was not completed but revealed that the mound was man made. Potsherds, a spindle whorl and iron slag were the main materials recovered. Comments on this material, by courtesy of the excavator, is reported in the appropriate sections.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### EXCAVATIONS 1976-81

##### Choice of sites for study

Oral traditions directed the choice of sites for excavation and study and also helped in the interpretation of the materials recovered. Since I was specifically interested in locating and studying sites in both Igbo and Igala speaking areas which would tell of Igbo-Igala interactions in the past, I relied mainly on local informants at Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah. (see relevant section in Chapter One).

##### The Aguleri District

Near Aguleri, three sites were selected (Fig.3):

(1) "Okpuno Igala" (an abandoned settlement), was chosen for study because of the historical relationship between this site and the Igala. Oral tradition (Manafa and Umuekete elders March, 1977) claimed that the walled area of "Okpuno Igala" was occupied by a ruler known as the Ata (father in the Igala language) while his subjects occupied the areas outside the wall. The ruler was said to have occupied the highest spot within this walled area in order to oversee his subjects. These subjects were said to have lived in adjacent villages of which only Umuekete is now inhabited. The Ata and most of his subjects abandoned their areas of habitation many years ago and went to Igala country after a series of invasions. The present Umuekete villagers who are Igbo speakers claim blood relationship with the Igala. This tradition seemed to suggest that 'Okpuno Igala' was formerly occupied by Igala settlers attracted to this area by trading possibilities along the Anambra river and that they later abandoned the area under pressure from the indigenous Igbo groups.

(2) "Ekpe Umuleri" - This is a linear earthwork or a wall around Umuleri town. This town is presently inhabited.

(3) "Okpuno Nri" (Okpuno in the Igbo language refers to an abandoned habitation site). This site was said by Chukwuemeka, Ajani priest of Aguleri, in March 1977: to be an abandoned Nri settlement.

##### The Idah District. Seven sites were selected for study (Fig.4).

1. Ojuwo Ata Ogu and at Idah was studied because it was established from oral traditions related by Alhaji Aliyu Obaje, present Ata of Igala and Odekina Ata in February 1980 that this site had an historical connection with Igbo-speaking people. The mound was said to have been built by a female Ata - Ebelejonu - to oversee her subjects. At the time, (before the Jukun invasion), the Ata's palace was near the mound. Ebelejonu also ordered a house to be built for her suitor (an Igbo hunter whom she made the first Ashadu) east of her compound. So Ebelejonu's compound, her suitor's house and the mound were in the same vicinity during the period under

discussion. It should be noted that Ebelejonu was one of the first four Igala royal ancestors. Boston (1968: 7-8) described as "Proeo-dynasty ancestors" who are not sharply differentiated from each other. Boston (op. cit. 7-8) placed the date of the beginning of present Igala kingship between the 13th and 16th centuries A.D. It is pertinent to mention that these dates correspond with the dates from Ojuwo Ata Ogu which range between the 13th and 16th centuries A.D. (see Part I). The mound was also the scene of certain functions. It was said that after the war the Ata mounted the mound to announce the result to his people, and, if someone had performed a brave act, (for example, killing one of the Ata's enemies) he was taken to the mound where rituals were performed so that he would not be haunted by the spirit of the individual whom he had killed (Alhaji Aliyu Obaje February 1980: personal communication).

2. Oketekakini at Idah was studied because of the traditional connection between it and Ogurugu and Aguleri. According to oral traditions given by Alhaji Aliyu Obaje, present Ata of Igala February 1980; but compare Shelton 1971: 14, 20-27), Onoja Oboni (a prince from Idah) and his followers tried to build a ladder to the sky at Oketekakini in an attempt to fight the people above, but the ladder broke and all except Onoja died. Undaunted by this, Onoja planned to fight people under the earth. He and another set of followers dug a pit at Oketekakini; entered the pit and appeared at Ogurugu. From here they undertook the military expeditions to many parts of Igboland including Aguleri. (It is possible that the attempt at constructing a ladder to the sky refers to efforts at expanding northwards while under the earth refers to movements southwards).

3. "Ubuduapa": This was a purported burial place of the Jukun soldiers who invaded Idah during the Igala-Jukun war (of the 15th century). It is said by Alhaji Aliyu Obaje, present Ata of Igala February 1980 and March 1981 that most of the soldiers died after drinking water and eating fish from river Nachala.

4. Ogbola; 'Oketeogbe'; and 'Oketeorata' are mounds about 30-50 m away from the eastern palace wall at Idah and 'Opata' is a mound by the Idah-Makurdi road and about 100m west of the palace main gate. Oketekakini was the highest of all the mounds located.

The Ogurugu District. Seven sites were selected to study here. (Fig. 5).

At Ogurugu two mounds, at Obatamu and Atida, were chosen for study. Obatamu is said by Chief Tagbo Ukwella, his councillors and Ogurugu elders September 1977 and February, 1980; Eze Onyibo Nwoko March 1981; to be the earliest area in Ogurugu being (occupied before the arrival of Onoja Oboni and his followers from Idah. It is said to have been first occupied by Obatamu, the founder of Ogurugu and the father of Onoja Oboni. Atida was studied because Onoja and his followers were said to have settled at the Atida quarters. Three abandoned settlements - Manejo, Agayaji and Okete Ofoloko were also located at Ogurugu, as was a former dyeing centre (Ikpo) and a small mound - Omadane which was (purported to be the burial place of Onoja Oboni) (Fig.5). Okete Ofoloko and Omadane, Atida and Obatamumounds are located inside the Ogurugu town walls while Manejo, Agayaji and Ikpo are located outside. The Ikpo was a cloth dyeing centre, the artisans being said to have come from Idah many years ago. The dyeing centre ceased to exist because of the importation of clothing materials.

The survey included part of the Ogurugu walls, which were said to have been built by Onoja Oboni, to fortify his base (Ogurugu) and to ward off attacks from neighbouring Igbo groups (Chief Tagbo Ukwella, his councillors and Ogurugu elders September 1977 and February 1980: personal communication). (Henderson, 1972: 86-90, 94 and Onwuejeogwu 1974a: 69).

### Results of the Survey

A. 'Okpuno Igala' as mentioned above is located at Umueketa in Aguleri. It has a ditch and wall around it; its shape being sub-rectangular with the southern third extended to a semicircle. The maximum length of this site is about 800 m, while the maximum width is about 500 m. The wall is largely destroyed but traces of the bank, in some cases quite substantial traces are still visible (Fig.6). Almost at the centre of the enclosed area is a mound about 1m high and 30m across (Fig.7 & Plate 1). The people of Umueketa describe the mound at ukpo-eze (king's dais).

Within the enclosed area are groves of palm trees and clusters of medicinal plants which were said by the people of Umueketa to have been deliberately protected.

B. The Oketekakini mound - a part of which was excavated (A) - is located in a roughly triangular field (about 65 x 80 x 85 m) which lies by the northern wall of the present Ata's palace. The field is almost bare and a number of houses belonging to the custodians of the second gate of Ata's palace surround this field and the mound which is at its most northern corner. The mound itself is roughly elliptical in shape. It is about 80 cm high and 20 m across at the largest section (see Fig. 8 and Plate 3).

C. Ojuwo Ata Ogu at Idah, an oval mound surrounded by houses and with hardly any vegetation around it was surveyed. It is c. 6 m high and 30 m across at the widest point. (see Plate 2).

D. Several mounds in Ogurugu were surveyed. The Atida mound is located in the Atida quarter about one third of a kilometre north-east of Chief Tagbo Ukwuella's compound. The mound is completely bare and about 60 cms high (Figs. 9 and 10). One of the two Obatamu mounds (A), in the Obatamu quarters, is located in front of the obu of Ezek Onyibo Nwokolo while the other (B) is behind his wife's house. The first mound has patches of grasses while the second is almost bare with a few orange trees. Both mounds are about 26 meters east of the Nsukka-Ogurugu road, are surrounded by houses and elliptical in shape. Mound A is c. 90 cm high and 9 m wide at the widest point section while the B is about 60 cm high and 8.5 m wide at the largest section (Figs. 11 & 12 and Plate 4).

### Excavation technique

Since each of the excavations was intended to delineate cultural units and changes through time, trench excavation was preferred to area excavation which tends to show more of horizontal changes. (Fagan 1975: 148) (see Coles 1972: 140-143). I was aware of the potentials of settlement study in these areas but the work was not looking for house types or features/structures depicting settlement pattern.

In the excavations at Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah digging was in 10 cms spit levels and efforts were made to obtain information about cultural changes throughout the spit levels. Digging in all the sites was taken down to sterile subsoil (the original ground levels on which the mounds had been created). Soil dug from all the sites were dry-sieved (with sieves having mesh sizes of 4-6 mm), and the cultural material was analysed according to the spit levels.

### Procedure

The excavation of Umuekete (Aguleri) site which took place in March/April 1976 was conducted by Dr. Frederick Anozie and myself, with five technical assistants from the laboratory of Archaeology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and fourteen labourers who were recruited locally. From the middle and highest part of the mound three trenches of 4 x 1 m each (A1, A2 and A3) were laid out on a straight line but separated from one another by two baulks (A1/A2 or 2 x 1 m and A2/A3 of 1 x 1 m). Digging started at the southern end (trench A3) which was the lowest part of the mound and Trench A1 at the highest part of the mound was dug last. However, to get a clear picture of the stratigraphic units, we later excavated the two baulks and then had a single trench of 15 x 1 m which was about 2.4 m deep at the centre and decreasing gradually to about 50 cm at the southern end of the trench.

I excavated the Oketekakini site in February 1980 with the help of two technical assistants, Benedict Ozomadu and Godwin Odoh, from the Archaeology laboratory, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and ten labourers. A trench of 1 x 4 m was laid out with its western end at the highest part of the mound and was excavated to a depth of 2 m.

In March 1980, I carried out an excavation at Atida with the help of Messrs Ozomadu and Odoh, and seven labourers. A trench of 1 x 4 m was set up with its western end at the highest point of the mound and was dug down to a depth of 60 cm.

I excavated the two Obtamu mounds in September 1981 with the help of two technical assistants - Godwin Odoh and Jonathan Ugwuanyi - from the Department of Archaeology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and ten labourers. Two test trenches of 1 x 2 m (trenches I and II) were sunk in the mound behind Chief Nwokolo's wife's house while test pit III was sunk in the mound in front of the obu (the Chief's house). Trench I was sunk at the highest section of the mound. Trench II was sunk in an area 13 cm below the reference point and trench III was sunk in an area of the same height with the reference point. We then dug down to 110 cm (in trench I); 83 cm (in trench II) and 80 cm (in trench III).

### Excavation results - stratigraphy

On the basis of colour and texture of the soil and of the organic and inorganic materials contained in it it was possible to divide all the excavated mounds into stratigraphic layers.

#### Umuekete: (Aguleri)

In trenches A1 and A2 and baulk A1/A2 at Umuekete four layers were distinguished. (Fig. 13). These are:

Layer I (top layer), dark brown in colour (7.5 YR 4/2 MUNSELL), is a loose fine grained soil. It contains worm casts, particles of burnt clay-like material and a lot of tiny rootlets.

Layer II dark reddish brown in colour (5 YR 3/3 MUNSELL), comprises loose fine grained soil which is dusty when dry and fairly sticky when wet. It contains charcoal specks, tiny rootlets and particles of burnt clay-like material. In trench A1 this layer contains four ash lenses.

Layer III dark reddish grey in colour (5 YR 4/2 Munsell), consists also of loose fine grained soil. It is dusty when dry and fairly sticky when wet. It contains charcoal specks.

Layer IV (basal layer) is a fairly compact reddish brown (5 YR 4/4 MUNSELL) fine grained soil. It is sticky when wet and breaks in clods. It contains very few charcoal specks.

Trench A3 contains only layers I and IV while baulk A2/A3 contains I, II and IV.

The arbitrary spit levels are correlated to the stratigraphic layers as follows:

Trench	Stratigraphic layers	Correlated spit levels
A1	I (top soil)	1, 2 and 3
	II	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18
	III	19, 20, 21, 22 and 23
	IV (basal layer)	24
A2	I (top soil)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
	II	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14
	(III	small sections of 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	(	and 20
Lower Section of mound	(	(these sections of the spits contain cultural materials).
	(	most of 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 (these sections of the spits contain no cultural materials) and 21.
A3	(IV (basal layer)	
A3	I (top soil)	1, 2, 3, and most of 4, 5 and 6.
	II (basal layer)	small sections of 4, 5, 6, and all of 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Oketekakini (Idah) Here in the mound five layers were identified (Fig. 14):

Layer I (top soil) dark brown in colour (7.5 YR 4/2 MUNSELL), is a very loose fine grained soil which is dusty when dry. It contains charcoal specks, tiny rootlets and a lot of lateritic concretions.

Layer II dark reddish brown in colour (5 YR 3/4 MUNSELL), is a loose fine grained soil, dusty when dry but fairly sticky when wet and breaks in clods. It contains a lot of lateritic concretions and few charcoal specks. At the top section (spit level 3) which is quite close to layer I (the top soil) it contains very few tiny rootlets.

Layer III is similar to Layer II but it contains larger lateritic concretions than Layer II.

Layer IV dark reddish grey in colour (5 YR 4/2 MUNSELL), is a fine grained soil with a lot of fairly large lateritic concretions. It is dusty when wet and breaks into clods. It contains charcoal specks.

Layer V (basal layer) is a fairly compact reddish brown (5 YR 4/4 MUNSELL) fine grained soil with fewer pieces of lateritic concretions and charcoal specks compared with those in the above layers. It is sticky when wet and breaks in clods.

Sporadic ash lenses occurred at spit levels 3-5 (20 - 50 cm) at different sections.

The arbitrary spit levels are correlated to the stratigraphic layers as follows:

Stratigraphic layers	Correlated spit levels
I (top soil)	1, 2 and a small section of 3
II	most of 3, and then all of 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8
III	9, 10, 11 and 12
IV	13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18
V (basal layer)	19 and 20.

Atida (Ogurugu) In this mound only two layers were identified (Fig. 15) - the top soil and an underlying unit.

The top soil, dark reddish brown in colour (5 YR 3/4 MUNSELL), is a loose fine grained soil. It contains few tiny rootlets.

The basal layer, yellowish red in colour (5 YR 5/6 MUNSELL), is made up of compact silty soil which is dusty when dry but very sticky when wet

and breaks in clods.

Stratigraphic layer	Correlated spit levels
I (top layer)	1, 2, 3, and 4
II (basal layer)	5 and 6.

#### Obatamu (Ogurugu)

In the mounds four layers were identified in test pits I and III (Figs. 16, 17 and 18).

Layer I (top soil) dark reddish brown in colour (5 YR 3/4 MUNSELL), comprises of loose silty soil with sandy inclusions. It is dusty when dry but not as sticky as layers II, III and IV when wet. It contains a lot of roots and rootlets.

Layer II reddish brown in colour (5 YR 5/4 MUNSELL), consists of a fairly compact silty soil; dusty when dry and fairly sticky when wet. It contains tiny rootlets.

Layer III brown in colour (7.5 YR 5/2 MUNSELL), is a loose silty soil. It is dusty when dry and fairly sticky when wet. It contains tiny rootlets.

Layer IV (basal layer) yellowish red in colour (5 YR 5/6 MUNSELL), is made up of compact silty soil. It is dusty when dry and very sticky when wet and breaks in clods.

Trench II contains layers I, II and IV (layer III is completely absent).

The arbitrary spit levels are correlated to the stratigraphic layers as follows:

Trenches	Stratigraphic layers	Correlated spit levels
I	I (top soil)	1 and 2
	II	3, 4, 5 and a part of 6
	III	a part of 6 and all of 7 and 8.
	IV	9, 10 and 11
II	I (top soil)	1 and 2
	II	3, 4 and 5
	IV (basal layer)	6 and 7
III	I (top soil)	1
	II	2, 3 and 4
	III	5 and 6
	IV (basal)	7 and 8

### 1. Cultural Sequences

The following tables (tables 1-4) show the distribution pattern of the cultural materials in the various sites according to spit levels or layers.

Table 1a

Umuekete (Aguleri) site; number and weight of recovered materials (weight in grams) <sup>1</sup>.

NO = number; WT = weight

#### Surface collection

Pottery	Lumps of Baked earth
NO.36	3
WT.1000	50

1. The recovered materials from each level/layer were weighed in order give the reader an idea of the size of the materials used in the analysis.

Table 1b

Umuekete (Aguleri) site; number and weight of recovered materials according to spit levels (weight in grams).

## TRENCH A1

Levels	NO & WT	Pottery	Stones	Lumps of Baked earth	Iron Slags	Glass	Bones
1.	NO. WT.	578 6800	12 450	24 500	12 100	2 10	- —
2	NO. WT.	122 1500	2 2	2 1	- -	- -	- -
3.	NO. WT.	589 10200	11 1000	12 500	- -	- -	2 42
4.	NO. WT.	176 3500	- -	1 250	- -	- -	- -
5.	NO. WT.	183 4500	3 100	- -	- -	- -	2 92
6 & 6	NO. WT.	105 3000	- -	2 500	- -	- -	- -
8.	NO. WT.	229 6000	6 300	- -	- -	- -	4 162
9 & 10	NO. WT.	349 5000	2 50	4 5	- -	- -	- -
11.	NO. WT.	558 8600	4 400	5 50	- -	- -	2 107
12.	NO. WT.	437 7300	12 600	40 1800	1 50	- -	4 169
13 & 14	NO. WT.	359 10200	4 250	19 600	- -	- -	1 6
15 & 16	NO. WT.	152 2800	15 800	17 400	- -	- -	- -

17 & 18	NO. WT.	183 2500	21 1000	3 100	1 50	- -	3 35
19 & 20	NO. WT.	130 2000	3 25	- -	- -	- -	2 57
21 - 23	NO. WT.	266 3700	3 50	- -	- -	- -	2 69

Table 1d

Umuekete (Aguleri) site, number and weight of recovered materials according to stratigraphic layers (weight in grams).

Baulk A1/A2

Layers	NO. & WT.	Pottery	Stones	Lumps of baked earth	Glass	Kernells	Bones
1.	NO. WT.	179 4100	- -	- -	- -	1 0.5	- -
2.	NO. WT.	577 14200	18 1500	18 700	3 0.33	- -	2 49
3.	NO. WT.	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	2 223

	NO.		<u>BAULK A2/A3</u>				
1.	NO. WT.	94 1250	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
2.	NO. WT.	256 6250	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
	NO. WT.	230 3000	- -	4 1	2 -	- -	- -

Table 2

Ojuw Ata Ogu (Idah) site: number and weight of recovered materials according to stratigraphic layers (weight in grams).

LAYERS	NO. & WT.	STONES	LUMPS OF BAKED EARTH	BLOCKS OF SOIL	POTTERY	IRON SLAGS	BEADS	KERNELS	BONES
II	NO.	40	1	7	259	1	-	1	-
	WT.	1068	79	202	3724	2	-	0.5	-
II	NO.	2	-	--	260	-	-	-	-
	WT.	12	-	--	2701	-	-	-	-
III	NO.	4	-	--	111	1	-	-	-
	WT.	138	-	-	1364	12	-	-	-
IV	NO.	24	-	13	163	-	1	-	-
	WT.	484	-	143	2009	-	0.5	-	-
V	NO.	25	1	28	182	-	-	-	-
	WT.	963	9	614	1482	-	-	-	-
VI	NO.	2	-	4	42	-	-	-	-
	WT.	120	-	297	169	-	-	-	-

Table 3

Oketèkakini (Idah) site: numbers and weight of recovered materials according to spit levels (weight in grams)

	NO & WT.	POTTERY	STONES	SMOKING PIPES	CHINA WARES	BONES	PIECES OF BOTTLE	COWRIE SHELL	LUMPS OF BAKED EARTH	IRON SLAG
1.	NO. WT.	153 2497	43 1496	4 9	14 222	14 20	12 222	5 5	2 170	- -
2.	NO. WT.	98 2408	48 1872	2 5	8 125	5 45	-- --	8 10	1 61	- -
3.	NO. WT.	82 2368	10 460	4 25	8 260	14 87	3 32	9 12	1 28	- -
4.	NO. WT.	90 3265	8 815	1 5	2 70	24 150	- -	4 2	1 240	- -
5.	NO. WT.	74 2556	3 629	11 30	8 207	26 115	1 27	- -	- -	- -
6.	NO. WT.	88 2685	11 445	2 3	2 77	37 187	2 24	- -	- -	- -
7.	NO. WT.	47 1847	7 420	9 20	5 300	25 202	2 110	- -	- 255	- -
8.	NO. WT.	82 2778	63 3750	5 14	- -	38 245	10 269	1 -	2 381	- -
9.	NO. WT.	122 2071	101 5405	1- 1-	- -	18 100	- -	- -	- -	- -
10.	NO. WT.	44 1567	13 727	- -	- -	1 127	- -	- -	- -	- -
11.	NO. WT.	97 3878	55 7140	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	2 125

12.	NO.	46	9	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	WT.	1664	942	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	NO.	157	45	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
	WT.	4604	1432	-	-	37	-	-	-	-
14.	NO.	257	10	2	-	16	-	-	3	-
	WT.	8841	682	82	-	109	-	-	204	-
15.	NO.	65	5	3	-	6	-	-	-	-
	WT.	2310	800	144	-	14	-	-	-	-
16.	NO.	63	4	2	-	4	-	-	-	-
	WT.	2037	287	9	-	25	-	-	-	-
17.	NO.	62	19	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	WT.	1498	3089	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	NO.	67	4	4	-	4	-	-	2	-
	WT.	2076	170	139	-	17	-	-	178	1
19.	NO.	42	7	1	-	4	-	-	2	-
	WT.	847	670	17	-	50	-	-	-	-

Also recovered in level 7 are: (a) one knife with tang about 18 cm long and 3.5 cm at the broadest section. It weighs 47 gm and (b) one thin rod about 11cm long and 2mm in diameter. It weighs 1gm.

Table 4a

Obatamu (Ogurugu) site; number and weight of the recovered materials  
(weight in grams)

Surface collection

Pottery

No. 144  
Wt. 1,310

Table 4b

Obatumu (Ogurugu) site; number and weight of the recovered materials  
according to spit levels (weight in grams)

Levels	No. & Wt.	Pottery	Lumps of baked earth	Bones	Cowrie Shell	Stone	Kernel
1	No. 89 WT. 2,100		4 190	10 80	11 10	5 600	1 -
2	No. 27 WT. 1,800		4 300	1 10			
3	No. 58 WT. 1,500		4 100	5 40			
4	No. 52 WT. 1,500		1 2	8 40			
5	No. 27 WT. 1,000		1 3	1 2			
6	No. 42 WT. 1,300		1 60				
7	No. 55 WT. 1,805						

### Umuekete (Aguleri)

The main cultural materials recovered from trench A1 of the site were pottery, unworked stones (pebbles, sand stones and iron stones) and bones (table 1a). These occurred throughout the levels. However, lumps of baked earth (possible furnace walls) and iron slag occur only in the upper levels (1-18; layers I and II). (No cultural material was recovered from layer IV - the basal or pre-mound layer). In trench A2 pottery and unworked stones are present in all the levels (table 1c). Again, lumps of baked earth and iron slags occurred only in the upper levels (1-13; layers I and II). In trench A3 (table 1c) all the cultural materials, (pottery, unworked stones, lumps of baked earth and iron slag) occurred in both layers (the top soil and the basal layer). In baulk A1/A2 (table 1d) pottery occurred in layers I and II while bones were present in layers II and III. However, unworked stones and lumps of baked earth occurred only in layer II. In baulk A2/A3 (table 1d) pottery occurred in all the layers. The only lump of baked earth recovered from the baulk came from layer IV.

There is continuity in the occurrence of pottery, stones and bones (the main cultural materials) in the upper and lower levels/layers of the trenches and baulks. But the presence of iron slag and lumps of baked earth in the upper levels of A1 and A2 may suggest the presence of two successful cultural units for the site - probably the period without and period with iron smelting/smithing. The occurrence of iron slags in trench A3 could be due to disturbances (most probably erosion - trench A3 being at the lowest section of the mound).

### Ojuwo Ata Ogu

At this site (table 2) the main cultural materials (pottery, stones and pieces of fallen walls) were recovered throughout the layers (1-6). Only two iron slag fragments were recovered - one from layer I and the other from layer III (both upper layers), but two lumps of baked earth (possible furnace walls) occurred in upper and lower layers (I and V). It seems from the distribution of the cultural materials that one cultural unit is represented at this site.

### Oketakakini (Idah)

At this site (table 3) the main cultural materials, (pottery, stones, lumps of baked earth and smoking pipes), occur throughout the sequence (layer I-V). However, the European imports (China wares, pieces of gin bottles and European smoking pipes) and cowrie shells are present only in the upper layers (I and III). The distribution pattern of the cultural material suggest two cultural units - most probably period without and period with European influences.

### Atida (Ogurugu)

In this mound most of the cultural materials came from the top soil. Only 20 potsherds and a few cowrie shells were recovered from the basal layer which was rather very thin - about (20 cm) as against (40 cm) thickness of the top soil.

## Obatumu (Ogurugu)

In test pit I of this site (table 4) the main cultural materials (pottery, bones and lumps of baked earth - possible furnace walls) occur at almost all the levels. In pit II (table 4c) pottery, lumps of baked earth, bones, cowrie shells and beads (the main cultural materials) are present at most of the spit levels (including the basal level). In pit III (table 4c) pottery (the only cultural material present in large number) occurs in all the levels (levels 1-6). Lumps of baked earth occur in levels 1, 5 and 6. The cultural materials appear constant in their distribution pattern in the various spit levels in the three pits. It seems from the distribution of the cultural materials that one cultural unit is represented at this site.

### (iii) Chronology

C. 14 dates have been obtained from three sites. A. Shaw (1975: 503-517) has published the following dates on his Igbo-Ukwu excavations.

Table 5

Laboratory	Provenance	Radio carbon Age Half-life	Radio carbon Age Half-life	Range in years AD	Dendrochron- ologically corrected
1-2008	Wood from stool Igbo Richard	1110 $\pm$ 120	1133 $\pm$ 120	700-940	730-1000
HV-1514	Pit VI Igbo Jonah 3.35-4.27m	1075 $\pm$ 130	1107 $\pm$ 130	710-970	770-1030
HV-5151	Pit IV Igbo Jonah 1.37-1.68m	1100 $\pm$ 110	1143 $\pm$ 110	700-920	730-1000
HV-1516	Pit IV Igbo Jonah 1.52-1.68m	505 $\pm$ 70	520 $\pm$ 70	1360-1500	1350-1430
1-1784	Pit IV Igbo Jonah 1.6-2.9m	1110 $\pm$ 145	1143 $\pm$ 145	660-950	700-1020

Only one date was obtained from Igbo Richard (a burial chamber/shrine and an ancient cistem) and none from Igbo Isaiah (a store of regalia). Most of

the dates come from Igbo Jonah (the pit). Four of the five radio carbon dates cluster around 9th century AD while the fifth which Shaw (*op. cit.* 1969: 44) calls "odd man out" is around the 15th century AD. It would seem reasonable to place more reliance at least tentatively on the four 9th century AD dates which agree than on a single date which is an "odd man out" until there is evidence to the contrary (see Shaw 1969).

B. The following radiocarbon dates have been obtained from Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) (Shaw 1968a).

Table 6

Ata Ogu Mound Idah	455 $\pm$ 95 BP (AD 1495 $\pm$ 95)
Calibrated AD date	AD 1438 $\pm$ 168.
Ata Ogu Mound Idah	
VIII G(S) spit levels 13, 14	410 $\pm$ 95 BP AD 1540 $\pm$ 95
Calibrated AD date:	AD 1455 $\pm$ 168

The two dates - one from the lower and the other from the upper layers - range between the 13th and 16th centuries A.D.

C. The following dates have been obtained from the Umuekete site (processed by the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research, Wako-Shi, Saitama, 351, Japan):

Number	Provenance	C14 dates (yrs. B.P.)		YEARS 5730	AD 5568	CALIBRATED DATES:	YEARS AD 5568
		Based on half-life of 5730	5568				
N-3134	Al Level 7	710 $\pm$ 75	690 $\pm$ 75	1240 $\pm$ 75	1240 $\pm$ 75	1303 $\pm$ 180	1322 $\pm$ 130
N-3135	Al " 8	480 $\pm$ 80	465 $\pm$ 80	1470 $\pm$ 80	1485 $\pm$ 80	1428 $\pm$ 188	1434 $\pm$ 86
N-3136	Al " 14	395 $\pm$ 85	380 $\pm$ 85	1555 $\pm$ 85	1570 $\pm$ 80	1473 $\pm$ 195	1480 $\pm$ 195
N-3137	Al " 7	325 $\pm$ 80	315 $\pm$ 80	1625 $\pm$ 80	1635 $\pm$ 80	1538 $\pm$ 188	1555 $\pm$ 188
N-3138	Al " 9	475 $\pm$ 65	460 $\pm$ 65	1475 $\pm$ 65	1490 $\pm$ 65	1490 $\pm$ 164	1436 $\pm$ 164

Although these dates are not precisely in sequence they fall within the same time range - most of them range between the 13th and 17th centuries AD.

Smoking pipes provide a means of dating the site of Oketekakini.

Calvocoressi (n.d.) is of the opinion that the vast majority of identifiable pipes from inland Ghana and Nigeria are of 19th century age or later. He also cites various documents describing 19th century European trading activities in different parts of Nigeria in which smoking pipes were mentioned or used as articles of trade. Adams (1823: 174) for instance, in describing a Lagos chief's house that he had visited some twenty years previously noted that he saw a variety of trade goods including rolls of tobacco and boxes of pipes. Laird and Oldfield (1938: 34) also in describing the oil trade in the Niger delta between the Brass and the Igbo people, showed pipes and leaf tobacco to be the among the best items for barter. British smoking pipes recovered from archaeological contexts in Nigeria, Isoya (Eluyeni 1975) and Shaki (Calvocoressi n.d.) date to 19th century AD.

Among the Oketekakini pipes there are two stems with the names of their manufacturers. One has J. WAL ..... on one side and .... ER on the other. The second has S. MCLARDY on one side and MANCHESTER on the other. Walker (1975) talks of the stem fragments marked MCDUGALL GLASGOW and VOLUNTEER. These Walker suggests were MCDUGALL'S 'Volunteer' pipes. The pipe from Oketekakini marked J. WAL .... / ..... ER might also be a 'volunteer' pipe manufactured by J. WAL ... .

Oswald (1975) showed the theoretical possibilities of J. WAL .....

John Wall	London	fl 1619
John Wall	Bristol	fl 1619/50
John Wall	"	fl 1641/61
John Walter	"	fl 1653
John Wallis	"	fl 1723/4
John Walker	"	fl 1733/54
John Wallington	Portsmouth	fl 1655/8
Joseph Walton	Hull	fl 1747/54
J. Walsh	Eton	fl 1847
Joseph Wallace	Stowmarket	fl 1820/24
James Walker	Wakefield	fl 1857/77
John Wall	Worcester	fl 1841
Joshua Walker	Birmingham	fl 1851
John Waldie & Co	Glasgow	1870-1929 (known exporter)

(fl = flourished)

From their shapes and designs the pipes are probably of 19th century. All the above fit the name J. WAL ..... However, most can be eliminated, for, of the 19th century makers, only Waldie, a known exporter, and Joshua Wallace (Birmingham) lived in major exporting and industrial centres and Birmingham was not a major pipe-making centre as Glasgow was in the later part of the 19th century (Oswald *op. cit.*). Pipes of various other Glasgow makers are known from West Africa (Calvocoressi 1980: personal communication). The date range of J. Waldie pipes fits with that of the Mclardy pipes from the same site. S. Mclardy, operating in Manchester from

1869-1930 (Oswald *op. cit.*: 80) is the British pipe-maker specifically and identifiably named on some of the pipes. Dates from Waldie and McLardy pipes and complementary dates from British pipes in Nigeria (for example, pipes from Isoya and Shaki) place the upper layers (I and II) of Oketekakini site at late 19th century AD.

As regards locally made pipes, Ozanne (1962, 1969) has worked out various dates which suggest that the introduction of tobacco along the Guinea coast and therefore the beginning of local pipe production, dates from the first half of the 17th century. Calvocoressi (n.d.) also points out that where locally made pipes have been reliably dated in West Africa they occur in the 17th century or later contexts.

Effah-Gyamfi (forthcoming) has questioned the validity of the suggested 17th century date by Ozanne and is of the opinion that smoking and the use of smoking pipes could have been present in Ghana prior to this date. Lebeuf (1962, also see Ozanne 1969) has suggested that in the Chad basin *Datura metel* or Indian hemp was smoked with pipes prior to the introduction of tobacco. The Onwuejeogwus (1976, 1977) refer to a type of pottery tube similar to tobacco pipes, used by Nri people, in Anambra State, for inhaling medicine by smoking. They are of the opinion that the possibility of this practice (smoking medicinal herbs with pipes) predates the coming of tobacco. Anozie (1976) informs us that the oldest smoking pipes found at Ogoloma in Rivers State were recovered at a depth of 340cm, a depth of 80cm above a layer which dated between 1255 to 1400 AD. This could mean that the habit of smoking occurred in the area a little after AD 1400.

From the above discussion there is not as yet any reliable evidence which contradicts the assumption that both the pipe and the tobacco were introduced into West Africa from Europe and that this did not happen earlier than 1600 AD. However, we should not lose sight of Lebeuf's, Onwuejeogwus' and Edffah-Gyamfi's suggestions which could be confirmed by future research.

A fragment of a pipe base from Oketekakini (level 18) looks similar to some base fragments collected by Patrick Darling between Benin and Ukpilla. But these are unstratified and cannot be of help in dating the Oketekakini pipes. Although the Ogoloma pipes have some elements of similarities to the Oketekakini pipes (Nzewunwa 1980) the date from Ogoloma do not date the layers from which the pipes were recovered. Available evidence from the pipes, therefore, suggests that the Oketekakini site dates between the 17th and 19th centuries AD at least tentatively (it could be much earlier).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CERAMIC ANALYSIS

Since oral traditions suggest direct historical continuity between the past and present inhabitants of Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah from at least the 13th century AD, knowledge of present day pottery manufacture and classification in these and related areas might it was felt, be found useful for the analysis and interpretations of pottery recovered from the Umuekete (Aguleri), Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Oketekakini (Idah), Atida and Obatamu (Ogunigu) sites.

Studies of the potting traditions in selected Igbo areas (Aguleri, Inyi, Owerre-Ezukala) and Igala areas (Ojor, Igga and Nkpologu) revealed that notwithstanding minor variations there are strong elements of similarities in the actual manufacturing techniques, types of decorations and forms of pots in all these areas. Inyi and Owerre-Ezukala were chosen for study because information from Igbo-Ukwu suggests that the people there got pottery from different markets, mostly from Ufuma and Umunze about 20 to 25 kilometres north of Igbo-Ukwu. I found that most of the pots in the Ufuma and Umunze markets are and were obtained from Inyi and Owerre-Ezukala, and were transported to Igbo-Ukwu and to some other markets (including Aguleri). Ojor, Igga and Nkpologu were chosen for study because tradition suggests that the people of Ogurugu also from proto-historic times got some of their pottery from Ojor and Igga, while Idah people got some of their pottery from Nkpologu.

#### Tools used for pottery manufacture and decoration

In all the areas studied only a few tools are used in the processes of pottery manufacture: a big clay bowl for soaking the clay; mortar and pestle for grinding potsherds into 'grog'. A wooden board is at times used in mixing the clay and 'grog', but most often, this process is carried out on a clean floor or ground surface. Materials used for making a pot include the inverted top part of a necked pot which acts as a stand and a trimming knife or a sharp edged object (for example, a piece of bamboo stick). Tools used to decorate include pebbles, pieces of calabash or coco-nut shells for burnishing; cylindrical objects - carved wood or twisted frond/cord - used as roulettes; hollow sticks possessing two projections used for grooving; spatula or sharp pointed sticks used for incision; nets and sacks for impression.

#### Manufacturing process

Even though certain minor variations are to be found in the manufacturing techniques, certain essential features are common in all the pottery centres of Igboland and Igalaland under study. Pottery products are shaped by hand with the help of few simple tools and techniques; firing is done in open fires and not in kilns. The work of potting is an exclusive domain of women.

Five main stages of pottery manufacture are distinguishable: (i) obtaining the raw material; (ii) preparation of the clay; (iii) forming and decoration; (iv) drying and smoking; and (v) firing. After firing, the products are cleaned and this could be done by any one even the buyer.

#### (i) Obtaining the raw material

In the various potting localities two factors seem to determine the exploitation of clay sources: (i) the plasticity of the clay and the nearness of the source/sources to the potters. Potters dig up clay for themselves from a depth of about two to three metres or more with hoes, cutlasses and at times with shovels.

In Inyi and Ojor the potters make use of two types of clay - "white" and "black". In Owerre-Ezukala, about six kilometres from Inyi only "black" clay is available and made use of. In Inyi and Ojor the two types of clay are obtained and mixed together. The potters in Igga and Nkpologu make use of only the "black" clay.

#### (ii) Preparation of the clay

The processes in the preparation of the clay in all the areas - Aguleri, Inyi, Owerre-Ezukala, Ojor, Igga and Nkpologu - are similar but with minor variations. All are aware of the fact that no clay immediately after digging is suitable for making pottery, and that it has first to be worked into a homogeneous mass and any lumps of extraneous matter removed. For example, Ojor and Inyi make use of two types of clays. These are brought from their sources and first of all dried in the sun. After this, both are broken into small lumps and soaked separately in water for about 12 to 24 hours. Then both are mixed together and trodden upon. As this process continues water is added to the clay which becomes softened; unwanted particles are removed from it and ground potsherd (grog) is added as temper. It is then worked by hand to see that it achieves the right plasticity. In Owerre-Ezukala, Aguleri, Igga and Nkpologu the only available clay is first dried in the sun and later soaked in water before it is trodden upon. Later 'grog' is added to it as temper. In all the localities I noticed the same method of clay preparation; potters spread their clay to dry in the sun so that whenever it is put into water the intervening spaces are filled with moisture very swiftly, for this treatment hastens the breaking of the clay into smaller particles. Also in all the localities potters tread upon the clay mostly on the ground and grog is used as temper. It seems that quartz grains and other particles of sand found in some potsherds may not have been intentionally used by the potters as temper.

#### (iii) Forming and decoration

Prepared clay can be used to form a pot immediately or be left until the next day. Kneading starts on the palm, the base of the pot is built up from a lump of clay by hand. When the formed base is large enough it is then placed on akpurumakpu or onu-ite (Igbo) or okete (Igala) - an inverted shoulder and neck of a pot which acts as a stand. Some stands are intentionally manufactured. Akpurumakpu/okete (Plate 5) are of different sizes and are used according to the sizes of pots being manufactured. Clay

is then made into rolls and these are then worked in, one on top of the other by hand. While supporting the clay coil with the left palm, the potter uses the fore finger of the right hand to stick a new role on to the one before. She tries to maintain a uniform thickness first by the hands and secondly by using a scraping tool, for example, a piece of bamboo or calabash which generally smoothens the pot on the inside. This process continues until the required shape of pot is produced. The pot is then dried in the shade or in direct sunlight, depending on the intensity of the sun. After some six hours neck and rim are then added to the pot. Since rim and neck are introduced during the leather-hard stage it becomes necessary to use just the right amount of water that will help in this attachment. Also during this leather-hard stage the potter uses a smooth pebble, a piece of calabash or a coco-nut shell to smooth the body of the pot. This burnishing reduces porosity and also serves the purpose of smoothing the surface of the pot, increasing its strength and removing the unwanted particles. The pot is then left to dry before it is polished. Different materials are used as polish or slip in different areas. In Inyi and Ojor, a type of clay, yellowish in colour - *nchara* (Igbo) is used to polish pots. After polishing, the pot is decorated (see section on decoration) and then after it has been left to dry is ready for firing. Sometimes a pot may not be polished or slipped before firing. After firing the pot is allowed to cool before polishing.

### Decoration

While there may be differences in details from one area to the other the main decorative techniques prevalent in all Igbo areas (Aguleri, Inyi and Owerre-Ezekala) and Igala areas (Ojor, Igga and Nkpologu) are burnishing, grooving, incision, rouletting, impressing, perforating and applied or relief decoration. Descriptions of these techniques now follow:

(i) Burnishing: This is done by rubbing the surface of a pot with a smooth river-pebble, a coco-nut shell or a piece of calabash until the surface becomes smooth and shiny. As well as the external, the internal surfaces of the bowls are often burnished to reduce porosity. There is no evidence of any pattern to burnishing in all the potting centres studied.

(ii) Grooving: Grooves and ridges are produced on pots with bamboo or any hollow stick possessing two blunt and short projections. This notched stick is dragged over the surface of the pot to form different kinds of motifs depending on the designs the potter wants to produce and also on her ingenuity (Plate 13).

(iii) Incised or dragged lines: These are made with sharp pointed objects (especially sharp pointed sticks) which cut into the surface of a pot. Some of these lines can be vertical, horizontal or may form criss-cross patterns (Plate 14). With incision the cuts are V-shaped while grooves are U-shaped in cross-section.

(iv) Rouletting: A roulette impression is produced with a cylindrical object. This gives repeated impression when rolled on a pot. The roulettes could be made with carved objects (carved roulette - (Plate 15) or by plaiting fronds or strings (plaited frond or string roulettes), or by folding and twisting a single string or frond - twisted string/cord (Plate 16; see also 17) or frond (Plate 18) roulette. Maize cob can be used as roulette but this was not found in any of the areas studied. Ebebe (1978:

23) found bed-springs used as roulettes in Ishiagu in Afikpo local government area, Imo State. According to him the bed springs produced impressions very close to those made by grooving technique; but the spring impressions were much smaller and unorganised.

Any type of roulette impression is produced by rolling the object on the surface of the pot usually with the right palm. As this is being done the left palm is placed inside the pot at corresponding positions receiving the pressure from the right palm. The potter clears the holes in the carved or string roulette as soon as they are filled.

(v) Impression: This is a decorative technique which involves the pressing of such objects like finger-tip, net (Plate 19), sack (Plate 20) or comb-like object (Plate 21) on the surface of a pot. The shape and size of the impression depends on the shape and size of the object used.

(vi) Perforation: A sharp pointed stick is used to pierce through the body of the pot. Two types of perforations were discernible. One type usually found amongst small bowls consists of one or two holes probably designed to take a string for hanging the bowl on the wall. The second category of perforations covers almost all the body of the pot (Plate 22). Such a pot is still used as a sieve but might have been used for drying or steaming meat or fish on fire.

(vii) Applied or relief decoration: This type of decoration is made when the pot is still wet enough to allow the addition of clay. The extra clay added will form ridges or projections - bosses or cordons, sometimes animals and birds of various types are affixed to the body of some ritual and ceremonial pots like *ite ike* (Plate 23). While a boss is a projection, a cordon is a ridge. Both the boss and cordon may either be plain or decorated.

All decoration are applied to pots when they are still soft or at a leather-hard stage.

The following broad groups of decorations were identified in the modern archaeological sites under study: (i) Rouletting (ii) Grooving (iii) Incision (iv) Impression (v) Perforation (vi) Applied decorations (viii) Burnishing. Rim and body sherd burnished at the internal or external surfaces or both were identified.

#### (v) Drying/Smoking

The number of days a pot dries depends on the weather and on the size of the pot. According to an Inyi potter, Madam Nwandu Mbah, a very large pot, like *ite ike* stays for about ten days in the sun. Depending on the intensity of the sun the pot is either kept under it or under a shade. But if kept under the sun the potter must be watchful to see that the pot does not overdry. Potters through experience do not like rapid drying because the thinner parts may dry out completely and therefore shrink, while the thicker parts are still damp. This may result in the pot cracking.

In the rainy season the smoking may be used to dry pots but they are occasionally brought out on sunny days. Smoking proves useful when the humid weather does not allow for fast drying or when the pots are very big, for potters usually do not like to take the chance of breakages which may result from constant movements of the pots out to the sun and back from the

rain.

(vi) Firing

In all the localities pottery is fired in "open fires". Potters usually engage in group firing to utilize the advantage of their joint effort. Baked clay or stones on top of which sticks are laid are arranged on the ground. Next, the dry pots are arranged on the sticks sideways and in rows, the larger pots being below. The pots are then covered with dry grasses, green leaves and light firewood. The firing lasts for a few hours. When the fire dies down the pots are removed with poles and allowed to cool.

#### PROCEDURE OF POTTERY ANALYSIS

Pottery constituted the majority of the finds in all the sites under study at Umuekete, Ojuwo Ata Ogu, Oketekakini, Atida and Obatamu and was in the form of sherds.

In studying the pottery it was divided into rim and body sherds. The rim sherds were classified into diagnostic (defined as those which reveal the forms (shapes) of vessel types and in which the arc of the rim affords a means of calculating the diameter of the mouth of a vessel) and undiagnostic groups while body sherds were classified into plain and decorated categories.

The following attributes were then studied from all the sherds, burnishing, thickness, colour and temper. With the decorated body sherds, apart from the above, two other attributes were also studied; decorative techniques and motifs.

#### Pottery forms

In classifying the excavated rim sherds I relied greatly on the Igbo and Igala peoples traditional terminology/typology in the belief that such a procedure would make our classification as near meaningful and relevant as possible to the people being studied.

Series of observations and interviews show that in the parts of Igboland under study the Igbo (potters and the users of their products) classify pottery into three main groups -ite (necked pot), udu are synonymous. For example, a small (necked) pot used in getting out water from a well or used in taking water to the farm or market is called either ite mmili or udu mmili (water pot). A pot of such a size and shape when used for fetching water to an infant is called ite mmili but when found in shrines or when it is of ritual significance it is called udu alusi or ite alusi. Therefore forms and functions of pottery are both significant in the Igbo classificatory scheme. For instance, ite, generally refers to necked pots while oku refers to neckless vessels. But when the function of an ite or oku is attached it helps one to conceptualise the shape of such an ite (that is, its sub-group). For example, ite ofe (soup pot) shows some basic differences from ite mmili (water pot). A soup or cooking pot is generally shorter and has a wider rim diameter than a water pot (while a medium sized soup or cooking pot is about 25 cm high and has a rim about 18 cm in diameter; a medium sized water pot is 50 cm high and has a rim about 12 cm in diameter).

Amongst the Igala potters and users of their products, all types of pottery falls basically into three broad categories - ucha (necked pot), udu (narrow mouthed and long necked pot, sometimes with hole at the shoulder) and akele (bowl). The functions of the above categories help to subdivide them into their various sub-groups. For instance, a soup pot is called ucha oro but when a pot of the same size and shape is used for cooking medicinal herbs it is referred to as ubo. A pot used for fetching water from the stream is called otube while amo is a pot meant specifically for storage of water. Akele generally refers to all types of bowls but there are large bowls (usually with upright rims) referred to as igba.

It seems, however, that the basic criterion of shape used by the Igbo and Igala people in determining types of pottery is the presence or absence of a neck. Based on shape three main types of vessels are thus discernible from the Igbo and Igala pottery classification:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
|   | <u>amo</u>   |
| Type 1: Necked pot - <u>ite/ucha</u>                    | <u>otube</u> |
| Type 2: Narrow-mouthed and long necked pot - <u>udu</u> |              |
| Type 3: Neckless vessel (bowl) - <u>oku/akele</u> .     |              |

The main functions the above named vessels perform or performed can be used to subdivide them into their various sub-groups or sub-types.

Type 1 can be sub-divided into three sub-types and these are as follows:

Sub-type 1a: globular short necked pot with everted rim - ite mmili/otube (length of neck ranges from 15-40 mm) - meant specifically for portage of water and wine (Plate 6). (Occasionally the very large ones could be used for storage of these items).

Sub-type 1b: globular long necked pot with everted rim - ite mmili/amo (length of neck ranges from 50-120 mm) - meant specifically for storage of water and wine (Plate 7).

Sub-type 1c: cooking/soup pot with short neck and wide mouth - for example, ite ofe/ucha-oro (length of neck ranges from 9-16 mm) - meant specifically for cooking food (soup, yam etc). It could also be used for storage of food items like palm oil, mellow etc (Plate 8).

Type-2: (narrow mouthed and long necked pot) has no sub-type in Igbo and Igala classificatory scheme; length of neck ranges from 60-120 mm (Plate 9).

Type 3: Three sub-types of bowls are also discernible based on the functions they perform or performed.

Sub-type 3a: hemispherical bowl with upturned rim (Igba - Igala) - mainly used (in the past) for bathing and washing of clothes (Plate 10).

Sub-type 3b: hemispherical bowl with inturned rim - mainly used for preparing of food - for example, preparing of yam pottage (Plate 11).

Sub-type 3c: hemispherical bowl with everted rim -mainly used for serving of food (Plate 12). This sub-type is most often profusely decorated; hence the name oku oma (Igbo). Small vessel of sub-type 3a and 3b could also be used for serving of food.

Drawing from the above ethnographic studies the following vessel types were identified in the sites under study:

Type 1: globular short necked pot with everted rim and plain or grooved lip (length of neck ranges from 15-40 mm).

Type 2: globular long necked pot with everted rim and plain or grooved lip (length of neck ranges from 60-120 mm).

Type 3: globular narrow mouthed and long necked pot (length of neck ranges from 60-120 mm).

Type 4: deep bowl with very short neck and everted rim with grooved/or bevelled lip (length of neck ranges from 9-16 mm).

Type 5: hemispherical bowl with upturned rim with grooved/or rounded lip.

Type 6: hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly intumed rim and rectangular shaped lip.

Type 7: hemispherical bowl with full intumed, wide and slanting rim which has slightly rounded lip.

Type 8: hemispherical bowl with everted rim and rounded/or grooved lip.

Type 9: hemispherical and carinated bowl with everted rim.

Type 10: hemispherical and carinated bowl with upturned rim.

A correlation of the ethnographically collected evidence and the archaeological suggests the following:

Archaeological	In use today	
<u>classification</u>	<u>terminology/typology</u>	
Type 1 is the same as	Sub-type	1a
Type 2 is the same as	Sub-type	1b
Type 3 is the same as	Type	2
Type 4 is the same as	Sub-type	1c
Types 5 and 10 are the same as	Sub-type	3a
Types 6 and 7 are the same as	Sub-type	3b
Types 8 and 9 are the same as	Sub-type	3c

## THE ANALYSIS

### (A) UMUEKETE (AGULERI) SITE

From this site 9,667 potsherds were recovered. Out of this number, 555 were rim sherds while 8,684 were body sherds. Out of 555 rim sherds 444 are diagnostic while 111 are not. Three rim sherds were recovered from the surface of which one was diagnostic. The breakdown of the number of the diagnostic and undiagnostic rim sherds in the trenches and baulks is as follows:-

Table 8

Umuekete (Aguleri) site showing distribution of rim sherds

Excavated area	Rim sherds No	Diagnostic No	Undiagnostic No
A1	224	171	53
A2	214	186	28
A3	37	26	11
A1/A2	47	37	10
A2/A3	27	22	5

#### Form

For the Umuekete mound seven types of vessels were identified.

These are as follows:

- (i) Globular short necked pot with everted rim and plain or grooved lip (type 1 - Fig. 19: 1).
- (ii) Globular long necked pot with everted rim and plain or grooved lip (type 2 - Fig. 19: 2).
- (iii) Deep bowl with very short neck and everted rim and with grooved/or bevelled lip (type 4 - Fig. 19: 3).
- (iv) Hemispherical bowl with upturned rim with grooved/or rounded lip (type 5 - Fig. 19: 4).
- (v) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly inturned rim and rectangular shaped lip (type 6 - Fig. 19: 5).
- (vi) Hemispherical bowl with full inturned, wide and slanting rim which has slightly rounded lip (type 7 - Fig. 19: 7).

(vii) Hemispherical bowl with everted rim and rounded/or grooved lip (type 8 - Fig. 19: 6).

Their distribution is as follows (also see Fig. 20):

Table 9

Umuekete (Agurleri) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types according to trenches and baulks (% of total)

SURFACE			A1		A2		A3		A1/A2		A2/A3		THE ENTIRE SITE	
TYPES	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4			108	24.33	134	30.18	18	4.05	32	7.21	19	4.28	311	70.05
2			1	0.25	1	0.23							2	0.45
4			2	0.45			1	0.23					3	0.68
5			34	7.65	19	4.28	5	1.13	4	0.9	3	0.68	65	14.64
6	1	0.23	17	3.83	22	4.95	1	0.23	1	0.23			42	9.45
7			5	1.13	8	1.80							13	2.93
8			4	0.9	3	0.68	1	0.23					8	1.80
TOTAL			444											

The distribution of the rim sherds according to the various spit levels/layers and according to the trenches and baulks is also summarised in Table 10 and Fig. 21 which is intended among other things at showing their distribution pattern.

Looking at Table 10 and Figs. 20 and 21 the following were discovered: amongst the vessel types, type 1 (globular short necked pot), is the most predominant, forming 70.05% of all the diagnostic rim sherds recovered from the site. Apart from this it occurs in all the trenches and baulks. On the other hand types 2 (globular long necked pot) occurs only in trenches A1 and A2 and constitutes only 0.45% of the diagnostic rim sherds. In terms of distribution according to spit levels, type 1 appears constant in all the trenches and baulks except for trench A3 in which it is absent at levels 7 and 8. Type 2 occurs only at levels 13 and 14 in trench A1 and at level 8 in trench A2. From the various spit levels one cannot talk of increase or decrease in popularity of Type 1 vessel as one moves from the bottom to the top levels.

The deep bowl with very short neck (type 4) occurs in trenches A1 and A3 and constitutes 0.68% of the diagnostic rim sherds. It occurs at levels 6 and 13; and 14 in trench A1 and at level 8 in trench A2. Type 5 (hemispherical bowl with upturned rim) constitutes 14.64% of the diagnostic rim sherds. It occurs in all the trenches and baulks and therefore has a wider distribution pattern than all the other bowls. However, it is better represented in trench A1 than in A2. The hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly inturned rim (type 6) constituting 9.45% occurs in trenches A1, A2 and A3 and baulk A1/A2. It is the only type that occurs at the surface. It appears to be much more constant in trench A2 than in A1. Type 7 (hemispherical bowl with full inturned, wide and slanting rim : 2.93%) occurs only in trenches A1 and A2 while type 8 (hemispherical bowl with everted rim - 1.80%) occurs in trenches A1, A2 and A3. It is present on top of trench A1 and at the bottom of trench A2. Not much can be deduced from this distribution pattern. Unlike the pots there is no subgroup of the bowls whose distribution pattern appears constant at the various spit levels in the trenches and baulks. For example, there is complete absence of types 4, 7, and 8 in baulk A1/A2; 4, 6, 7 and 8 in baulk A2/A3. In trench A3 type 7 is completely absent and apart from type 5 which occurs in levels 7 and 8, 9 and 10, types 4, 5, 6 and 8 occur only as single sherds in levels 3 and 4.

Whereas types 5, 6, 7 and 8 do not occur from levels (17-23) of trench A1, in trench A2 types 6 and 7 appears in the upper and lower levels and type 8 appears in the lower levels (14-18). In trench A3 types 5, 6, 8 are very few and there is not much significance to their distribution pattern. The study of the diagnostic rim sherds therefore shows that there is no evidence of any typological break between the upper and lower levels. Types 2 and 4 which appear only in the upper levels are too few for any meaningful deduction to be derived.

Table 10

Umekete (Aguleri) site showing number and percentage of vessel types according to spit levels/layers (percentage based on total diagnostic rim sherds).

Excavated area	spit levels/ layers	VESSEL TYPES												Undi- gnosed	TOTAL				
		1		2		4		5		6		7				8			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%			No	%		
A1	1	11	78.57															5	14
	2	1	50							1	50							1	2
	3	7	63.64						2	18.18	4	36.36						6	11
	4	16	84.21						3	15.80								3	19
	667	8	66.67						2	16.67	2	16.67						1	12
	8	7	50			1	7.14	4	28.57	2	14.29						3	14	
	9610	6	75						2	25							3	8	
	11	9	64.29						2	14.29	1	7.14	2	14.29			6	14	
	12	11	61.11						3	16.67	1	5.56					4	18	
	13614	8	44.44	1	5.56				5	27.78	2	11.11	1	5.56			8	18	
	15616	3	37.5						3	37.5	1	12.5					2	8	
	17618	6	50						6	50							5	12	
	19620	3	100														2	3	
21-23	6	75						2	25								2	8	
A2	1	3	60						2	40								1	5
	2	22	68.75						6	18.75	3	9.38	1	3.3				4	32
	3	14	100														1	14	
	4	10	7.43								2	14.29	1	7.14			1	14	
	5	10	83.33								2	16.67					2	12	
	6	10	70.59						2	11.76	1	5.88	2	11.76			1	17	
	7	5	62.5						1	12.5	2	25					2	8	
	8	8	80	1	10						1	10					3	10	
	9610	10	76.92						3	23.08							3	13	
	11612	20	83.33								2	8.33					2	24	
	13	9	75								4	33.33					2	12	
	14	3	27.27						4	36.36	2	18.18	1	9.09	1	9.09	3	11	
	15616	6	75						1	12.5	1	12.5					2	8	
A3	17618	2	33.33								1	16.67	1	16.67	2	33.33	2	6	
	162	4	100														2	4	
	364	6	60			1	10	1	10	1	10			1	10		3	10	
	566	2	100														1	2	
A1/A2	768																2	1	
	9610	6	100								3	33.33					3	9	
A1/A2	1	7	77.78						2	22.22								3	9
	2	15	88.24						2	11.76							5	17	
	3	10	90.91								1	9.09					2	11	
A2/A3	1	3	100						2	13.33							1	3	
	2	13	86.67														3	15	
	4	3	75						1	25							1	4	

i) Rim diameter

Diameter of all diagnostic rim sherds were measured in trench A1 using pottery rim diameter chart (Fig. 22). The measurements are as follows:

Table 11

Umuekete (Aguleri) site showing range and mean of the rim diameters

Types	No. of Sample	Range	Mean
1	108	6 - 20	14
2	1	12	12
4	2	16 - 18	17
5	34	20 - 30	26
6	17	12 - 20	16
7	5	12 - 18	15
8	4	16 - 22	18

Measurements in centimetres.

The rim diameters of types 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 (bowls) range from 16 - 30 cm. Only about 35% of type 1 vessels in trench A1 have rim diameters ranging from 14 cms and above.

(ii) Decoration:

Decoration seemed to have been used on all parts of the vessels of types 1 and 3 - 8. Only type 2 had no evidence of decoration. Types 1 and 4 with grooved lips, however, have decorations starting immediately below their necks.

Certain categories of decorations are not associated with any of the vessel types. For example, incised lines, twisted frond and cord roulette impressions have high percentage occurrences amongst all the vessel types. The present analysis also suggests that there is not much difference in the percentage occurrence of blunt impression amongst the various vessel types - in most cases this technique is used to decorate rims of vessel. But pre-firing perforation and net impression occur with the types 1 and 4 only. This picture may or may not reflect the smallness of the sample. Applied decoration is more typical of types 5-8 but mostly of type 8. Grooving is also common with types 5 - 8. It seems that types 1, 2 and 4 vessels were not burnished. The vessels seemed to have been smoothed by hand because in

some cases clay pieces seemed to be sticking out. Most of types 5, 6, 7 and 8 vessels were burnished and some decorations on them seemed to have been done on a burnished background.

Body sherds

As mentioned earlier, 9667 potsherds were recovered from this site and out of this number 8,684 were body sherds. Of the body sherds 6,319 are decorated while 2,365 are plain. Out of the decorated sherds 456 have unclear decorations and the remaining 5,863 sherds have decorations which are identifiable. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 12

Umuekete (Aguleri) site showing distribution  
of body sherds

Surface	No. of body sherds	No. of plain sherds	No. of dec. sherds	No. of identifia- ble dec. sherds	No. of un- clear dec. sherds
Surface	32	9	23	23	
A1	3,953	1,066	2,887	2,519	368
A2	2,736	74	1,995	1,925	70
A3	757	287	470	469	1
A1/A2	669	105	564	556	8
A2/A3	537	157	380	371	9

The 5,863 body sherds with identifiable decorations were sorted out into eleven decorative categories in order to represent all decorative techniques observable on them. Their distribution according to trenches and baulks and according to the spit levels/layers is summarised in tables 13 and 14 (also see Figs. 23 and 24).

Umuekete (Aguleri) site showing number and percentage distribution of decorated sherds

53

Table 14 (A)

Umuekete (Aguleri) showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels/layers (sherds with unclear decorations are not included in the column of total decorated sherds.

## R O U L E T T E

		TWISTED CORD		TWISTED FROND		CARVED		GROOVING		INCISION	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
SURFACE		3	13.04	10	43.48			4	17.39	1	4.35
A1	1	25	7.33	251	73.61			2	0.59	3	0.88
	2	8	16.33	32	65.31			1	2.04	2	4.08
	3	23	6.42	282	78.77			8	2.23	7	1.96
	4	9	7.26	85	68.55			2	1.61	2	1.61
	5	11	9.82	79	70.54			2	1.79	3	2.68
	6&7	2	4.00	35	70.00	2.0	4.0	1	2.00	1	2.00
	8	6	3.80	123	77.85			1	0.63	5	3.16
	9&10	8	4.32	134	72.43			4	2.16	7	3.78
	11	9	2.80	272	84.77			2	0.62	5	1.55
	12	21	8.17	188	73.15			3	1.17	4	1.56
	13&14	33	13.47	149	60.82			7	2.86	3	1.22
	15&16	5	7.81	27	42.19			9	14.06	1	1.56
	17&18	17	17.53	45	46.39			8	8.25	8	8.25
	19&20	7	13.21	27	50.94	1.0	1.89	3	5.66	4	7.55
	21-23	43	41.35	25	24.04			12	11.54	3	2.88
A2	1	1	0.51	174	89.23			5	2.56	3	1.54
	2	41	7.75	391	73.91	1	0.19	15	0.28	13	2.46
	3	15	7.18	148	70.18			3	1.44	4	1.91
	4	3	3.49	48	55.81			4	4.65	2	2.33
	5	7	5.11	93	67.88			4	2.92	9	6.57
	6			41	75.93						
	7	2	3.23	45	70.31			5	7.81		
	8	5	10.00	16	32.00			7	14.00		
	9&10	14	7.78	134	74.44			3	1.67	3	1.67
	11&12	11	7.64	95	65.97			6	4.17	9	6.25
	13	7	5.47	90	70.31			2	1.56	3	2.34
	14	4	7.14	37	66.07			5	8.93	2	3.57
	15&16	8	12.70	31	49.21			6	9.52	2	3.17
	17&18	6	20.00	7	23.33			6	20.00	2	6.67
A3	1&2	5	3.31	113	74.83			1	0.66	4	2.64
	3&4	9	6.87	83	63.36			6	4.58	3	2.29
	5&6	3	12.5	8	33.33			2	8.33	2	8.33
	7&8	1	5.56	1	5.56			5	27.78	2	11.11
	9&10	21	14.48	91	62.76			6	4.4	5	3.45
A1/A2	1	10	7.75	69	53.49			2	1.55	7	5.43
	2	40	15.75	161	63.39					10	3.94
	3	8	4.62	100	57.80					10	5.78
A2/A3	1	3	5.00	44	73.33					3	5.00
	2	14	9.46	100	67.57			12	7.59	1	.068
	4	11	7.19	106	69.28			4	2.61	3	1.96

Table 14 (B)

Umuekete (Aguleri) showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels/layers (sherds with unclear decorations are not included in the column of total decorated sherds).

I M P R E S S I O N				P E R F O R A T I O N				A P P L I E D		T W I S T E D		U / C	T O T A L		T O T A L S H E R D S (both 14a & b)	
N E T		B L U N T		P R E - F I R I N G		P O S T - F I R I N G		D E C B O S S E S		F R O N D I N C I S I O N		D E C	D E C . P L A I N S H E R D S			
N O	%	N O	%	N O	%	N O	%	N O	%	N O	%	N O	N O	N O		
SURFACE																
	5	21.74												23	9	32
1	51	14.96			3	0.88			1	0.29	5	1.47	43	341	164	548
2	4	8.06					1	2.04			1	2.04	26	49	41	116
3	25	6.98			1	0.28	1	0.28			1	3.07	105	358	102	565
4	24	19.35			1	0.81					1	0.81	7	124	30	161
5	14	12.5							1	0.89	2	1.79	13	112	29	206
6&7	7	4			1	2					1	2	16	50	18	84
8	15	9.49									8	5.06	19	158	29	206
9	12	6.49			2	1.08			9	4.86	9	4.86	10	185	42	328
10&11	23	7.76	1	0.31	1	0.31					7	2.17	52	322	149	523
12	23	10.89			1	0.39	4	1.56			8	3.11	35	257	11	408
13&14	43	17.55					1	0.41	1	0.41	8	3.27	13	245	62	320
15&16	17	26.56							2	3.13	3	4.69	2	64	33	141
17&18	10	10.31	1	1.03					1	1.03	7	7.22	9	97	51	157
19&20			5	9.43	1	1.89			3	5.66	2	3.77	12	53	57	122
21-23	3	2.88	12	11.54	2	1.92			3	2.88	1	0.96	6	104	143	253
A2	1	9	4.62							3	1.54	6	195	38	239	
2	50	9.45	1	0.19					1	0.19	16	3.03	30	529	160	719
3	29	13.88	2	0.96	1	0.48	1	0.48			6	2.87	3	209	56	268
4	25	29.07			1	1.16					3	3.49	2	86	22	110
5	18	13.14									6	4.38		137	33	170
6	5	9.26									8	14.81	2	54	28	84
7	5	7.81	1	1.56					1	1.56	6	9.38	6	64	28	98
8	11	22							5	10	6	12		50	52	102
9&10	18	10					1	0.56			7	3.89	10	180	53	243
11&12	15	10.42	7	4.86					1	0.69			5	144	110	259
13	17	13.28							2	1.56	7	5.47		128	52	180
14	5	8.93							1	1.79	2	3.57	1	56	30	87
15&16	8	12.70	8	12.70									1	63	43	107
17&18	2	6.67	3	10	2	6.67					2	6.67	4	30	36	70
A3	1&2	22	14.57								6	3.97		151	61	212
3&4	25	19.08									5	3.82	1	131	60	192
5&6	2	8.33	6	25							1	4.17		24	43	67
7&8	4	22.22	5	27.78										18	32	50
9&10	14	9.66	3	2.07	1	0.69			3	2.07	1	0.69		145	91	236
A1/A2	1	34	26.36	1	0.78						6	4.65		129	27	156
2	30	11.81	1	0.23	1	0.23	1	0.23			10	3.94	5	254	48	307
3	49	28.32									6	3.47	3	173	30	206
A2/A3	1	5	8.33	1	1.67						1	1.67		60	22	82
2	22	14.86									9	6.08	5	158	70	223
4	24	15.69	1	0.65							4	2.61	4	153	65	222

Table 15

Distribution of Pottery (besides rim and body sherds) and parts  
of clay nozzles according to Spit Levels at Umuekete (Aguleri) site

	Neck No.	Base No.	Lid No.	Lid Knob No.	Parts of Clay nozzles No.
SURFACE COLLECTION	3			1	
TRENCH A1 LEVELS					
1	6			1	6
2					3
3	6	1		1	3
4	5				1
5	8				2
6&7	1				
8	6				3
9&10	8				2
11	12				5
13&14	13	1		1	
15&16	5				
17&18	11				
19&20	6				
21&23	7				
TRENCH A2 LEVELS					
1	8				8
2	17			1	9
3	6	1			3
4	6				3
5	10				5
6	11				2
7	5				
8	8				
19&10	14			1	
11&12	16			1	
13	9			1	
14	7				
15&16	10				
17&18	8				
TRENCH A3 LEVELS					
1&2	8				
3&4	10				6
5&6	5				
7&8	3				
9&10	9			2	

BAULK  
A1/A2  
LAYERS:

1	11	
2	22	7

BAULK  
A1/A3  
LAYERS

1	5	
2	6	3
4	3	9

#### (i) Decorative motifs

At Umuekete (Aguleri) site twisted cord rouletting results in regularly recurring elliptically depressed areas (Fig. 25 : 1), and twisted frond, rouletting results in regularly recurring elliptically raised areas (Fig. 25:2). The designs of both the twisted cord and twisted frond are set diagonally. However, there are few sherds with fine twisted cord impressions which occur mainly from levels 17 - 23. Like the twisted cord roulette, the fine twisted cord forms regularly recurring elliptically depressed areas which are arranged diagonally. But the fine twisted cord roulette has very tiny depressed areas.

The three sherds with carved rouletting in Umuekete trench A1 have chevron motifs. In trench A2 the only sherd with carved rouletting has chevron motif (Fig. 25 : 3).

Grooving produces ridges in between the grooves. Generally these are horizontal. However, in trench A1, one sherd in levels 19 and 20 and two sherds in levels 17 and 18 have grooves forming concentric circles (Fig. 25: 4).

Generally incised parallel lines were found on body sherds but a few sherds with vertical, wavy and semi-circular lines also occur (Fig. 25 : 5).

Net impression produces lozenges or rhombus figures on body sherds. The sizes of the figures depend on the sizes of the meshes of the nets (Fig. 25 : 6). Blunt impressions are often impressions made on sherds by finger-tip, tip of snail shell or such like objects. In trench A1 levels 17 - 23 there are a few sherds with depressed areas which look like small triangles. Such triangles seem to have been made by the pressing of a flat object with pointed edge on the sherds (Fig. 25 : 7).

Pre-firing (Fig. 25 : 8) and post-firing (Fig. 25 : 9) perforations occurred, and some sherds with post-firing perforations seem to have been broken off when the holes were being bored. Only a small proportion of pots may have post-firing perforations.

TABLE 16

Umuekete (Aguleri): showing thickness of the plain and decorated sherds

Thickness	No. & %	ROULETTE		IMPRESSION						PERFORATION		Twisted Cord/ Incision	Plain
		Twisted cord	Twisted frond	Grooving	Incision	Net	Blunt	Pre-firing	Post-firing				
4	No												3
	% of Total												0.53
5	No	2	19										16
	% of Total	1.39	1.93										2.84
6	No	8	123	4	2	2		1		2			61
	% of Total	5.56	12.46	8.51	5.88	1.35		10		4.44			10.82
7	No	27	280	10	5	6	4	2	4	6			126
	% of Total	18.75	28.37	21.28	14.71	4.05	30.77	20	80	13.33			22.34
8	No	43	296	12	9	21	4			13			118
	% of Total	29.86	29.99	25.53	26.47	14.19	30.77			28.89			20.92
9	No	21	173	6	13	35	1	2		7			101
	% of Total	14.58	17.53	12.77	38.24	23.65	7.69	20		15.56			17.91
10	No	21	71	4	3	38	3	3		12			55
	% of Total	14.58	7.19	8.51	8.82	25.68	23.08	30		26.67			9.75
11	No	13	10	4	2	26		2	1	5			34
	% of Total	9.03	1.01	8.51	5.88	17.57		20	20	11.11			6.03
12	No		8	2		8							31
	% of Total		0.81	4.26		5.41							5.5
13	No	5	3	2		7	1						6
	% of Total	3.47	0.30	4.26		4.73	7.69						1.06
14	No	3	2	2		4							2
	% of Total	2.08	0.20	4.26		2.70							0.35
15	No		1	1		1							6
	% of Total		0.1	2.13		0.67							1.06
16	No	1	1										5
	% of Total	0.69	0.1										0.89

measurements in millimetres

Bosses were added to the body of the pot and all had grooves forming spiral motifs (Fig. 25 : 10).

Sherds with combined decorations (twisted frond impression and incision) possess regularly recurring elliptically raised areas and incised parallel/wavy lines (Fig. 25 : 11).

#### (ii) Decorative techniques

Tables 13 and 14 and figs 23 and 24 show that twisted frond rouletting is the most characteristic decorative technique in the site while carved rouletting is the least. Twisted frond roulette, net impression, twisted cord roulette, grooving and incised lines occur in all the trenches and baulks and at the surface. Blunt impression occurs in the trenches and baulks but does not occur at the surface. Pre-firing perforation does not occur at the surface and in baulk A2/A3 but occurs in others; also post-firing perforation does not occur at the surface and in trench A3 but occurs in others. Applied decoration occurs in all the trenches but is absent in the two baulks and at the surface.

In terms of distribution, according to spit levels, twisted frond roulette, net impression and twisted cord roulette appear constant - occurring at the surface and in almost all the spit levels and layers in the various trenches and baulks. Other decorative techniques with significant distribution pattern are incision, grooving and twisted cord/incision. These occur in most of the spit levels and layers. The remaining decorative techniques occur in small rather insignificant quantity through the sequence.

Very few of the body sherds show evidence of burnishing. In trench A1 for instance, only 242 (6.12%) sherds out of 3,953 body sherds appear to have been burnished. Of the 242 sherds 167 are decorated sherds while 75 are plain sherds. Most of the plain sherds have burnished internal and external surfaces. Most of the decorated sherds have burnished internal surfaces except for those with incised and grooved lines some of which have both internal and external burnished surfaces.

#### (iii) Thickness

Absolute measurements were obtained from 1,997 body sherds from levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10, 12 and 13, 17 and 18 and 21 -23 in trench A1 (Tables 16).

The tables suggests that a great percentage of the sherds have their thickness ranging from 6 - 10 mm with those which are 8 mm thick predominating amongst all the categories except for sherds with net impression (to be dealt with later). Only 3 and 37 of the plain sherds are 4 and 5 mm thick respectively. Also few sherds have their thickness ranging from 11-16 mm.

#### (iv) Colour

Observations refer to both external and internal surfaces. Of the 1,997 body sherds studied, 1,258 (63.19%) range in colour from light reddish brown (Munsell 2.5 YR 6/4) to dark reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 2.5/4);

499 (25.44%) are dark grey (MUNSELL 2.5 YR N4/ ) to black (MUNSELL 2.5 YR N2.5/ ); while 240 (11.36%) show a colour range from light reddish brown to dark reddish brown on their external surfaces and dark grey to black on their internal surfaces of vice versa.

(v) Temper

Ground potsherd and, perhaps particles of sand, were used as temper. Also particles of iron oxide (haematite) were found in some of the sherds. The size of the grit used as "temper" was measured and ranged from fine (less than 0.6 mm in diameter) to medium (0.6 mm - 1.9 mm in diameter) and to coarse (more than 1.9 mm in diameter). The size of the grit cannot be correlated with the quality of the fabric (texture of the pottery). Coarse grit was found in sherds with smooth surfaces while medium and fine grit were found amongst sherds with rough surfaces.

Other sherds and pieces of baked clay (besides rim and body sherds).

A total of 428 sherds which are parts other than the rim and body sherds were recovered from the Umukete site. These include neck, base, lid (Fig. 26 : 1 and 2), lid knobs (Fig. 26:3), and parts of clay nozzles (Fig. 26 : 4). These sherds are 146 in trench A1, 170 in trench A2, 46 in trench A3, 40 in baulk A1/A2 and 26 in baulk A2/A3. For distribution according to levels/layers see table 15.

(B) OJUWO ATA OGU (IDAH) SITE

Out of 1,107 sherds recovered from this site, 34 are rim sherds, 1,025 body sherds and 48 fell into the miscellaneous group.

Form

Very few (34) rim sherds were recovered. Out of these 22 are diagnostic and fall into the following vessel types:

- (i) Globular short necked pot with everted rim and plain or grooved lip (type 1 - Fig. 27 : 1).
- (ii) Globular long necked pot with everted rim and plain or grooved lip (type 2 - Fig. 27 : 2).
- (iii) Hemispherical bowl with upturned rim with grooved/ or rounded lip (type 5 - Fig. 27 : 3).
- (iv) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly inturned rim and rectangular shaped lip (type 6 - Fig. 27 : 4).

The distribution pattern of these vessel types according to the various layers is summarised in Table 17.

Table 17

Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types according to layers (percentages based on total rim sherds from each layer).

	Vessel Types								UNDIA- GNOSTIC		TOTAL
	1 No.	%	2 No.	%	5 No.	%	6 No.	%	No.	%	
<u>SURFACE</u>	1	50					1	50			2
<u>LAYERS</u>											
1	2	28.57							5	71.43	7
2	3	25	2	16.67			2	16.67	5	41.67	12
3	2	25					5	62.5	1	12.5	8
4					1	25	3	75			4
5									1	100	1
6	-		-		-		-		-		

As depicted in the table, trends discernible are a high incidence (12 out of 34) of undiagnostic rim sherds; an absence of rim sherds in layer 6 (bottom layer) and the presence of one undiagnostic piece in layer 5. With respect to overall distribution type 1 appear constant in the upper layers (1 - 3); type 2 occurs in an upper layer (layer 2) and type 5 in a lower layer (layer 4). Type 6 is present at the surface and in layers 2, 3 and 4.

(i) Rim diameter

Table 18

Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) site showing range and  
mean of the rim diameters

Types	No. of sample	Range	Mean
1	8	10-20	13
2	2	12-16	14
5	1	22	-
6	11	14-22	17

Measurements in centimetres.

(ii) Decorations

Only one of the type 1 vessels has a grooved lip. The rim sherds recovered do not seem to be large enough to incorporate areas with decorations. However, all the bowls (types 5 and 6) are decorated. Two of these have parallel grooves; one of which has blunt impressions on the ridges and the rest are decorated with twisted cord roulette impressions. Also all the bowls show evidence of their having been burnished internally. None of the pots seemed to have been burnished.

Body sherds

Amongst the body sherds 572 are plain, while 453 are decorated. Of the decorated sherds 16 have unclear decorations and the rest 437 have decorations which are identifiable. The sherds with identifiable decorations were sorted into nine decorative categories in order to represent all decorative categories observable on them. These are as follows:

Table 19

Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) site showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories (also see Fig. 28).

Types of decorations	Number of sherds	Percentage occurrence
<u>Rouletting</u>		
Twisted cord	361	82.61%
Carved	1	0.23%
Twisted frond	6	1.37%
<u>Impression</u>		
Not	24	5.49%
Thumb (not thumb nail)	2	0.46%
<u>Incision</u>		
<u>Grooving</u>		
<u>Perforation</u>		
<u>Pre-firing</u>		
<u>Combination of decorations</u>		
Twisted cord/incision	13	2.97%
Total sample	437	

The above is then broken according to their occurrences in the various stratigraphic layers (Table 20 and Fig. 29).

(i) Decorative motifs

Twisted cord (Fig. 30:1), twisted frond (Fig. 30: 2), carved roulette (Fig. 30:5), net impression (Fig. 30:4), pre-firing perforation (Fig. 30:9), and the combined decorations (twisted cord/incision - Fig. 30:8) produce similar decorative motifs with those from Umuekete. As at Umuekete few sherds with fine twisted cord impression were recovered mainly from the lower layers of Ojuwo Ata Ogu. Grooving and incision produce mainly horizontal grooves (Fig. 30:7) or lines (Fig. 30:6). However, three sherds have incised wavy lines while one has incised vertical lines. Also one sherd has semi-circular grooves. The thumb impression (Fig. 30.3) produces deep depressions elliptical in shape.

Table 20

Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to stratigraphic layers (sherds with unclear decorations are not included in the column of decorated sherds)

ROULETTE		IMPRESSION										TOTAL DEC SHERDS No.		PLAIN SHERDS No.		TOTAL SHERDS No.						
TWISTED CORD	%	TWISTED FROND	%	CARVED	%	NET	%	THUMB	%	INCISION	%	GROOVING	%	PRE-FIRING PERFORATION	%	TWISTED CORD/INC	%	UNCLEAR DEC	%	TOTAL DEC SHERDS No.	PLAIN SHERDS No.	TOTAL SHERDS No.
2	25			5	62.5					1	12.5										8	8
1	109	86.51	1	0.79	5	3.97		6	4.76	3	2.38	1	0.79	1	0.79	4	126	129	259			
2	135	82.82	5	3.07	6	3.68	2	1.23	4	2.45	2	1.23		9	5.52	3	163	94	260			
3	31	86.11			1	2.77		1	2.77	1	2.77	1	2.77	1	2.77	2	36	73	111			
4	71	91.03			1	1.28		1	1.28	2	2.56	1	1.28	2	2.56	6	78	79	163			
5	9	52.94			1	5.88	1	5.88		5	29.41					1	17	164	182			
6	4	44.44					5	55.56									9	33	42			

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1984, <https://doi.org/10.30861/9780860542490>.  
of Oxford

Table 21

Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) site showing thickness of plain  
and decorated body sherds

Thickness		Plain	Twisted cord
4	No	15	4
	% of		
	Total	2.62	1.11
5	No	50	32
	% of		
	Total	8.74	8.86
6	No	107	76
	% of		
	Total	18.71	21.05
7	No	98	92
	% of		
	Total	17.13	25.48
8	No	127	59
	% of		
	Total	22.20	16.34
9	No	70	40
	% of		
	Total	12.24	11.08
10	No	40	26
	% of		
	Total	7.00	7.20
11	No	23	19
	% of		
	Total	4.02	5.26
12	No	23	13
	% of		
	Total	4.02	3.60
13	No	14	
	% of		
	Total	2.45	
14	No	5	
	% of		
	Total	0.87	
	TOTAL	572	

#### (ii) Decorative techniques

From table 20 and fig. 29 one observes that in each stratigraphic layer (except for layer 6) twisted cord roulette is more than all the decorated categories put together. Generally, there is continuity throughout the stratigraphic layers in the occurrence of such decorative categories as net impression and incision (incision however, does not occur in layer 6). The pre-firing category does not occur in layers 2 and 6. Such techniques as twisted frond roulette and thumb impression have break in the sequence - occurring only in layer 2. Carved roulette appears only in layer 5.

Due to the abraded nature of the sherds it is not easy to determine whether they were burnished or not. However, 45 (4.39%) sherds out of the 1,025 sherds show evidence of burnishing; 9 plain sherds have burnished external and internal surfaces. Of the decorated sherds only 20 with twisted cord impression have burnished internal surfaces.

#### (iii) Thickness

Emphasis is laid here on the analysis of the plain sherds and sherds with twisted cord impression because these are large enough for quantitative study. (see Table 21).

As at Umuekete this table suggests that most of the sherds have their thickness ranging from 6 - 10 mm. Those that are 8 mm thick predominate amongst the plain sherds while those that are 7 mm thick predominate amongst those with twisted cord impression. Few sherds have their thickness ranging from 11 - 14 mm.

#### (iv) Colour

As at Umuekete the 1,025 body sherds from Ojuwo Ata Ogu have the following colour ranges on both the external and internal surfaces: 579 (56 - 49%) range in colour from light reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 6/4) to dark reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5YR 2.5/4); 245 (23.90%) are dark grey (MUNSELL 2.5YR N4/) to black (MUNSELL 2.5YR N2.5/) while 201 (19.61%) show a colour range from light reddish brown to dark reddish brown on their external surfaces and dark grey to black on their internal surfaces or vice versa.

#### (v) Temper

Ground potsherd seem to have been used as temper but particles of iron oxide (haematite) were found in some of the sherds. Most of the iron oxide particles were about 5mm in diameter but in two sherds they were between 9 and 12 mm in diameter. The size of the grit used as temper ranged from fine (less than 0.6 mm in diameter) to medium (0.6mm - 1.9 mm in diameter) and coarse (more than 1.9mm in diameter). The size of the grit cannot be correlated with the quality of the fabric texture of the pottery.

#### Nozzles

In layers 1, 4 and 5, 48 pieces of baked clay which seem to be parts of clay nozzles were recovered (Fig. 27:6).

### (C) OKETEKAKINI (IDAH) SITE

Out of a total of 1,737 sherds recovered from this site, 236 are rim sherds, 1,447 body sherds and 54 fall into the miscellaneous group.

#### Form

201 of the 236 rim sherds are diagnostic and the following vessel types were identified:

- (i) Globular short necked pot with everted rim and with plain or grooved lip (type 1 - Fig. 31:1).
- (ii) Globular long necked pot with everted rim and with plain or grooved lip (type 2 - Fig. 31: 2).
- (iii) Deep bowl with very short neck and everted rim and with grooved/or bevelled lip (type 4 - Fig. 31: 3).
- (iv) Hemispherical bowl with upturned rim with grooved/or rounded lip (type 5 - Fig. 31:4)
- (v) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly inturned rim and rectangular shaped lip (type 6 - Fig. 31:6).
- (vi) Hemispherical bowl with full inturned, wide and slanting rim which as slightly rounded lip (type 7 - Fig. 31:8).
- (vii) Hemispherical bowl with everted rim and rounded/or grooved lip (type 8 : Fig. 31:5).
- (viii) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with everted rim (type 9 - Fig. 31:7).
- (ix) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with upturned rim (type 10 - Fig. 31-9).

The breakdown of vessel types and rim sherd distribution is presented in tables 22 and 23 and in Figs. 32 and 33.

Table 22

Oketekakini (Idah) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types

Types	Number	Percentage occurrence
1	38	18.91
2	4	1.99
4	81	40.30
5	14	7.00
6	37	18.41
7	3	1.49
8	16	7.96
9	5	2.49
10	3	1.49

Total diagnostic rim sherds = 201

From tables 22 and 23 and figs 32 and 33 the following may be deduced: three types - type 1 (globular short necked pot), type 4 (deep bowl with very short neck) and type 6 (hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly inturned rim) appear to be the most significant especially in terms of their frequency of occurrence through the levels. Type 1 occurs in almost all the spit levels (except 7, 12 and 15) and therefore in all the stratigraphic layers. Type 4 (the most dominant - forming 40.03% of all the diagnostic rim sherds) is almost as constant as type 1. It (type 4) also occurs in almost all the spit levels (except levels 11, 14, 18 and 19) and therefore in almost all the stratigraphic layers (except layer V). Type 6 seems to be distributed evenly - occurring in almost all the spit levels and therefore in all the stratigraphic layers. The rest types occur in rather small frequencies through the levels that it is difficult to discern much significance from their distribution pattern.

Generally, the distribution of the vessel types shows trends rather than any typological break between the lower (III, IV and V) and upper (I and II) layers. All the types (except type 10) appear in the upper and lower layers. Changes in percentage occurrence of types 1 and 4 vessels through the levels appear very inconsistent. But in terms of number there appear to be more of type 4 in the lower than in the upper layers. The same could be said of type 6. Type 8 (although very few in number) is found mainly in the lower layers. However, with type 1 the number is almost the same in the upper as well as in the lower layers.

Table 23

Oketekakini (Idah) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types according to spit levels (percentage based on total diagnostic rim sherds).

VESSEL TYPES													
Spit levels													
	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	UNDECOR- ATED	TOTAL	
1	1	25	2	50	1	25			1		1	4	
2	1	12.5	2	25	3	37.5	1	12.5	1	1.23	2	8	
3	2	18.18	1	9.09	4	36.36			1	9.09	3	27.27	
4	1	25	3	75							1	4	
5	6	46.15	1	7.69	3	23.08					3	13	
6	2	25	2	25	2	25	1	12.5			1	8	
7			9	100							2	9	
8	2	11.76	10	58.82	1	5.88			3	17.65	4	17	
9	4	36.36	1	9.09	3	27.27	1	9.09			3	11	
10	1	25	1	25	1	25					1	4	
11	2	11.76	6	35.29	3	17.65	4	23.53	2	11.76	4	17	
12			3	50	3	50						6	
13	9	27.27	1	3.03	1	3.03					3	33	
14	1	2.94	15	44.12	4	11.76	8	23.33	1	2.94	5	34	
15					1	20	3	60	1	20	4	5	
16	1	20	4	80								5	
17	1	20	2	40	2	40						5	
18	2	50			1	25	1	25			3	4	
19	2	66.67			1	33.33					1	3	

(i) Rim diameter

Table 24

Oketekakini (Idah) site showing range and mean of the rim diameters.

Types	No. of sample	Range	Mean
1	38	10-18	14
2	3	8-12	9
4	82	12-28	19
5	14	18-28	15
6	37	14-20	17
7	3	16-24	19
8	16	14-26	20
9	5	16-22	17
10	3	16-28	16

Measurements in centimetres.

The rim diameters of types 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 range from 12 - 28 cm. About 33% of type 1 vessels in this site have rim diameters ranging from 14 cms and above.

(vi) Decoration

Evidence from the decorated rim sherds suggests that burnishing is more associated with the bowls than with the pots, 75% of the bowls are burnished internally but none of the pots seem to have been burnished. Although the sample is too small to be conclusive, the few instances of applied decorations and grooving occur only on the bowls. Other kinds of decoration are found on all the vessel types.

Body sherds

Out of a total of 1,447 body sherds recovered from the site, 453 are plain and 994 are decorated; 65 of the decorated sherds have unclear decoration. These 929 sherds fall into fourteen categories representing all the decorative techniques distinguished.

Table 25

Oketekakini (Idah) site showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories (also see Fig. 34).

Types of decorations	Number	Percentage occurrence
<u>Rouletting</u>		
Twisted cord	190	20.45
Twisted frond	467	50.27
Grass string	47	5.06
<u>Grooving</u>	16	1.72
<u>Incision</u>	66	7.10
<u>Perforation</u>		
Pre-firing	12	1.29
<u>Impressions</u>		
Blunt	12	1.29
Made with a tubular object	1	0.11
Net	26	2.80
Sack	4	0.43
<u>Applied decoration</u>		
Knobs	4	0.43
<u>Combination of decorations</u>		
Twisted frond/pre-firing perforation	3	0.32
Twisted frond/incision	3	0.32
Twisted cord/incision	78	8.40

The above is broken down according to their occurrences in the various spit levels (Table 26 and Fig. 35).

Oketekakini (Idah): showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels (sherds with unclear decorations are not included in the column of total decorated sherds).

Table 26 (B)

Spit Levels	Applied Dec		Twisted Frond/Pre- firing Perforation		Twisted Frond/ Incision		Twisted Frond/ Incision		Un- clear Dec		Total Dec.		Plain		TOTAL DEC SHERDS (for Tables 26A and B)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1							1	1.04	7		96		33		136	
2					1	2.33			3		43		36		82	
3									6		46		15		67	
4			1	2					1		50		27		78	
5			1	2.70					6		37		11		54	
6					1	2.70			3		32		38		73	
7			1	5					2		20		14		36	
8									3	4.76	43		17		62	
9	1	0.94					2	2.83	3		70		36		106	
10									2		19		11		32	
11							10	20.83	2		48		30		80	
12							10	37.03	1		27		10		38	
13							9	10.47	9		86		37		132	
14	1	0.68					16	10.88	9		147		57		213	
15	1	2.33					6	13.95	1		43		11		55	
16							3	12.5	2		24		27		53	
17	1	3.70					4	14.81	5		27		25		57	
18							11	23.40			47		10		57	
19							3	12	3		25		8		36	

TABLE 26 (A)

Oketekakini (Idah): showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels (sherds with unclear decorations are not included in the column of total decorated sherds).

Spit Levels		R O U L E T T E						I M P R E S S I O N											
		Twisted Cord		Twisted Frond		Grass String		Grooving		Incision		Pre-Firing Perforation		Blunt "Tubular" object		Net		Sack	
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	8 8.33	70	72.92	7	7.29	1	1.94	3	3.12	2	2.08	1	1.04	1	1.04	1	1.04	1	1.04
2	4 9.30	30	69.77	1	2.33					1	2.33			6	13.95				
3		32	69.57	2	4.35	2	4.35	4	8.70	1	2.17			4	8.70	1	2.17		
4	3 6	35	70	5	10			1	2	1	2			3	6	1	2		
5	4 10.81	20	54.05	1	2.70	1	2.70	3	8.11	1	2.70			2	5.41	1	2.70		
6	1 3.13	30	93.75					1	3.13										
7		15	75					2	10	2	10								
8	1 2.38	24	57.14	10	23.81			2	4.76					3	7.14				
9	8 11.43	43	61.43	6	8.57	4	3.77	1	0.94					4	3.77				
10	7 36.84	8	42.11	1	5.26	3	15.79												
11	13 27.08	17	35.42	5	10.42			3	6.25										
12	9 33.33	5	18.52	1	3.70	1	3.70	1	3.70										
13	25 29.07	37	43.02	5	5.81			6	6.98					2	2.33	1	1.16		
14	38 25.85	60	40.82	2	1.36	2	1.36	22	14.97	3	2.04			3	2.04				
15	13 30.23	17	39.53			1	2.33	3	6.98	1	2.33			1	2.33				
16	14 58.33	2	8.33					2	8.33					2	8.34	1	4.17		
17	9 33.33	8	29.63					3	11.11										
18	25 53.19	6	12.77			1	3.70	3	8.51					1	2.13				
19	8 32	8	32					5	20							1	4		

Table 27

Distribution of pottery (besides the rim and body sherds)  
according to spit levels at Oketekakini (Idah) site

Levels	Neck	Lid	Lid Handle	Base
1			3	1
2				
3	2			
4		2		
5	4			
6		4		
6	1	1		
8	1			
9	2			
10	2			
11	2			
12	1	1	1	
13	6	1		
14	7			2
15	1		1	
16				1
17	2			
18	1			
19	1			

(i) Decorative motifs

This site produced similar decorative motifs to those from Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu: twisted cord (Fig. 36:1), twisted frond (Fig. 36:2), pre-firing perforation (Fig. 36:9), net (Fig. 36:12) and blunt (Fig. 36:6) impressions and the combined decorations (twisted frond/pre-firing perforation - Fig. 36:8, twisted frond/incision - Fig. 36:10, and twisted cord/incision - Fig. 36:14). As at the other two sites some sherds (about 2% of the twisted cord category) with fine twisted cord impressions were recovered from layers II and III. Grass string rouletting which occurs only in the upper layers (layers I and II) results in irregular wavy depressed lines with wavy ridges in between (Fig. 36:3; Plate 17). Grooving and incision produce mainly horizontal grooves (Fig. 36:5) or lines. However, some sherds have incised wavy lines (Fig. 36:4). Sherds with sack impression and impressions made with a tubular object were recovered. The second type of impressions are oblique impressions made with an as yet unidentifiable tubular object, possibly the snapped shaft of a long bone of a small animal or large bird about 9 mm in diameter. Such impressions produce rows and columns of tightly packed arcs (Fig. 36:7). Sack impression produces rows of raised areas which look like tiny squares covering all parts of the sherd (Fig. 36:11). This technique occurs only in the upper layers (layers I and II). Applied decoration is mainly in the form of small knobs (Fig. 36:13).

## (ii) Decorative techniques

The distribution pattern of the decorative techniques show that there is a reduction in twisted-cord roulette from the lower (III, IV and V) to the upper (I and II) layers which corresponds with an increase in twisted-frond roulette. Although the sample is small there is a possible decrease in grooving plus incision categories as one moves up the sequence; with a corresponding increase in impressions, particularly net impression. The main jump in net impression corresponds with the appearance of sack impression in the upper layers. The reduction in the twisted cord and incision categories in the upper layers is also reflected in the reduction of the combination of the two techniques - twisted cord/incision. This, however, should be expected. Again most of the decorative techniques show trends rather than any break in occurrence. But grass string roulette does not occur from levels 15 -19. Sack impression occurs only in the upper (I and II) layers while applied decoration occurs only in the lower (III, IV and V) layers.

Few sherds show evidence of burnishing. For instance, 65 (12.22%) of the 532 sherds (from levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 10 - upper layers; 12, 15 and 18 - lower layers) studied appear to have been burnished. Of the 65 sherds 37 are plain while 28 are decorated. The decorated sherds have burnished internal surfaces and 13 plain sherds have burnished internal and external surfaces.

## (iii) Thickness

Measurements of the thickness of the 532 body sherds were taken, emphasis being laid on the analysis of the plain, twisted cord, twisted frond and twisted frond/incision categories which are large enough for quantitative study (see table 28).

Table 28 suggests that a great percentage of the sherds have their thickness ranging from 6 - 10 mm. Those that are 8 mm thick predominate amongst the plain sherds, twisted cord and twisted cord/incision categories. Those that are 7 mm thick predominate amongst sherds having twisted frond impressions. Few sherds have their thickness ranging from 11 - 13 mm.

## (iv) Colour

Observations refer to both external and internal surfaces. Of the 532 body sherds studied 267 (50.19%) range in colour from dark grey (MUNSELL 2.5 YR N4/) to black (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 2.5/); 154 (28.95%) are light reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 2.5/4); while 111 (20.86%) show a colour range from light reddish brown to dark reddish brown on their external surfaces and dark grey to black on their internal surfaces or vice versa.

## (v) Temper

Ground potsherd and particles of sand seem to have been used as temper. Again as at Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu, the size of the grit used as "temper" ranges from 0.6 mm in diameter to (0.6 - 1.9 mm) and to more than 1.9 mm. Again as at the two sites the size of the grit cannot be correlated with the quality of the fabric.

TABLE 28

Oketekakini (Idah): showing thickness of the plain and decorated sherds.

Thickness		Plain	Twisted Cord	Twisted Frond	Twisted Cord/ incision
4	No	1		3	
	% of	0.83		2.26	
	Total				
5	No	8	1	24	
	% of	6.67	1.79	18.05	
	Total				
6	No	30	4	37	1
	% of	25	2.14	27.82	3.33
	Total				
7	No	30	11	41	7
	% of	25	19.64	30.83	23.33
	Total				
8	No	31	18	20	7
	% of	25.83	32.14	15.04	23.22
	Total				
9	No	13	7	6	4
	% of	10.83	12.5	4.51	13.33
	Total				
10	No	6	6	1	5
	% of	5	10.71	0.75	16.67
	Total				
11	No		4		3
	% of		7.14		10
	Total				
12	No	1	4	1	3
	% of	0.83	7.14	0.75	10
	Total				
13	No	1	1		
	% of	0.83	1.79		
	Total				
TOTAL		120	56	133	30

Measurements in millimetres

### Other sherds (besides rim and body sherds)

A total of 54 sherds which are parts other than the rim and body sherds were recovered; these include neck, lid (Fig. 37:1), lid handle (Fig. 37:2) and base.

### (D) ATIDA (OGURUGU) SITE

111 sherds were recovered from this site - 91 in layer I, 81 of which are body and 10 rim sherds. Of the 20 sherds recovered from layer II, 17 are body and 3 are rim sherds.

### Form

7 out of the 13 rim sherds are diagnostic and the following vessel types were identified:

- (i) Globular short necked pot with everted rim and with plain or grooved lip (type 1 - Fig. 38:1).
- (ii) Deep bowl with very short neck and everted rim and with grooved/or bevelled lip (type 4 - Fig. 38:2).
- (iii) Hemispherical bowl with everted rim and rounded/or grooved lip (type 8 - Fig. 38:3).

The breakdown of the vessel types is presented in table 29.

Table 29

Atida (Ogurugu) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types.

Types	Number	Percentage occurrence
1	3	42.86
4	2	28.57
8	2	28.57
TOTAL	7	

While one type 1 and the types 4 and 8 were recovered from layer I only two of type 1 came from layer II.

### Body sherds

Out of 81 body sherds recovered from layer I, 18 are plain, 11 have unclear decorations while 52 have identifiable decorations. In layer II, 6 are plain and 11 have identifiable decorations (out of the 17 body sherds

recovered). Sherds with identifiable decorations are broken down into the following decorative categories:

Table 30

Atida (Ogurugu) site showing number and percentage distribution of decorative categories (also see Fig. 39)

Types of Decorations	Number	Percentage Occurrence
Twisted cord roulette	3	4.76
Twisted frond roulette	4	6.35
Grass string roulette	5	7.94
Sack impression	1	1.59
Net impression	36	57.14
Mat impression	10	15.87
Incision	2	3.17
Grooving	2	3.17
<hr/>		
Total sherds	<u>63</u>	

The distribution of these decorative techniques according to stratigraphic layers is summarised in Table 31 (also see Fig. 40).

(i) Decorative motifs

Apart from mat impression all other decorative motifs have been described. Mat impression is produced by woven fibres most probably from raffia palm. Such woven objects produce small depressed rectangles (Fig. 41:4). Twisted cord (Fig. 41:1), twisted frond (Fig. 41:2), grass string (Fig. 41:3), sack (Fig. 41:5) and net (Fig. 41:6) impressions, grooving (Fig. 41:7) and incision (Fig. 41:8) from this site produce similar decorative motifs with those from Oketekakini.

(ii) Decorative techniques

The distribution pattern of pottery does not show changes - there is no evidence of increase or decrease in vessel types or decorative categories with time. A feature that does, however, emerge from this small sample is the significantly high proportion of net impression compared to the other sites.

Very few sherds seem to have been burnished. Amongst the vessel types the two type 8 vessels have burnished internal surfaces. Amongst the body sherds 4 plain sherds have burnished internal and external surfaces.

Table 31

Atida (Ogunugu); showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according stratigraphic layers (sherds with unclear decorations not included in the column of decorated sherds).

ROULETTE												IMPRESSION											
Twisted Cord		Twisted Frond		Grass String		Sack		Net		Mat		Incision		Grooving		Unclear Dec		Total Dec Sherds		Plain Sherds		Total Sherds	
No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
3	5.77	3	5.77	4	7.69	1	1.92	28	58.85	10	19.23	1	1.92	2	3.84	11		52		18		81	
		1	9.09	1	9.09			8	72.72			1	0.09					11		6		17	

### (iii) Colour

The 63 body sherds have the following colour ranges on both the external and internal surfaces: 39 (61.90%) range in colour from light reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 6/4) to dark reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 2.5/4); 15 (23.81%) are dark grey (MUNSELL 2.5 YR N4/) to black (MUNSELL 2.5 YR 2.5/) while 9 (14.29%) show a colour range from light reddish brown to dark reddish brown on their external surfaces and dark grey to black on their internal surfaces or vice versa.

### (iv) Temper

From this site 1,227 potsherds were recovered. Out of this number 111 are rim sherds; 82 are diagnostic. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 32

Obatamu (Ogurugu) site showing distribution of rim sherds

	SURFACE	Trench I	Trench II	Trench III
Rim sherds	8	32	53	18
Diagnostic	7	21	45	9
Undiagnostic	1	11	8	9

### Form

Out of the 82 diagnostic rim sherds eight vessel types were identified:

- (i) Globular short necked pot with everted rim and with plain or grooved lip (type 1 - Fig. 42:1);
- (ii) Globular long necked pot with everted rim and with plain or grooved lip (type 2 - Fig. 42:2);
- (iii) Globular narrow mouthed and long necked pot (type 3 - Fig. 42:3);
- (iv) Deep bowl with very short neck and everted rim, and with grooved or bevelled lip (type 4 - Fig. 42:4);
- (v) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with slightly inturned rim and rectangular shaped lip (type 6 - Fig. 42:5);
- (vi) Hemispherical bowl with full inturned, wide and slanting rim which has slightly rounded lip (type 7 - Fig. 42:6);
- (vii) Hemispherical bowl with everted rim and rounded/or grooved lip (type 8 - Fig. 42:7).

Table 33

Obatumu (Ogurugu) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types according to spit levels  
(percentage based on total diagnostic rim sherds)

SPIT LEVELS	1		2		3		4		6		7		8		9		UND	TOTAL
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%		
SURFACE Trench I	5	71.43											2	28.57			1	7
	1	16.67			1	16.67					1	16.67	3	50			4	6
																	1	
	1	33.33					1	33.33	1	3.33			2	40	1	20	2	5
	2	33.33			2	33.33	2	33.33	1	6.67			1	16.67			2	3
					1	100											1	1
Trench II																		
	4	36.36	1	9.09	3	27.27	1	9.09	2	18.18							2	11
	4	26.67			4	26.67							3	20	4	26.67	3	15
	9	7.37			4	21.05	3	15.79	3	15.79							3	19
Trench III																		
																	2	
																	2	
																	1	
	6	75					2	25									4	8
							1	100										1

(viii) Hemispherical and carinated bowl with everted rim (type 9 - Fig. 42:8).

The distribution of these vessel types according to the various spit levels in the test pits is summarised in table 33 (also see Fig. 43).

Table 33 and Fig. 43 suggest that Type 1 is the most dominant of all the types - forming 39.02% of all the diagnostic sherds. It occurs in all the test pits and at the surface. It occurs only in level 5 in test pit III and from levels 2 to 4 in test pit II and in levels 1, 4 and 5 in test pit I. Another type with significant quantity and significant distribution pattern is type 4 which forms 19.51% of all the diagnostic rim sherds. It occurs in the three test trenches - in levels 1, 4, 5, and 6 in test trench I and at levels 5 and 6 in test trench III. In test trench II it occurs from levels 2 to 4. Type 8 which constitutes 13.41% of the diagnostic rim sherds occur in test trench I and II and at the surface. In test trench II it occurs only in level 3 while in test pit I it occurs in levels 1, 3 and 5. Other types are very few. Type 3 (narrow mouthed and long necked pot) appears for the first time in this site (in levels 2 and 4 in test pit II).

On the whole the rim sherds are too few for much to be made of their distribution pattern. However, type 2 (globular long necked pot) occurs in very small quantity as is the case at the Umuekete, Oketekakini and Ojuwo Ata Ogu sites.

(i) Rim diameter

Table 34

Obatumu (Ogurugu) Site showing range and mean of the rim diameters

Types	No. of samples	Range	Mean
1	32	8 - 24	16
2	1	16	16
3	7	- 12	7
4	16	6 - 26	18
6	8	14 - 22	18
7	2	14 - 16	15
8	11	12 - 28	20
9	5	20 - 24	21

(ii) Decorations

About 70% of the bowls were burnished internally while none of the pots seemed to have been burnished. Also at Obatumu grooving seems to have been restricted to the bowls while other decorations cut across all the vessel types. There is one type 8 vessel with carved roulette decoration. A few of the bowls belonging to types 6, 8 and 9 have two pre-firing perforations each at their rims.

### Body sherds

Of the 1,227 potsherds recovered from this site, 1,116 are body sherds; 783 are decorated. Of the decorated sherds 35 have unclear decoration and the remaining 748 sherds have decoration which is identifiable. The breakdown is as in table 35.

Table 35

Obatumu (Ogurugu) site showing distribution of body sherds

	SURFACE	Trench I	Trench II	Trench III
Body sherds	36	318	399	363
Plain sherds	8	97	78	150
Decorated sherds	28	221	321	213
Sherds with identifiable decorations	28	208	314	198
Sherds with unclear decorations	-	13	7	15

The 748 body sherds with identifiable decorations fall into eleven decorative categories representing all the decorative techniques observable. As at the other sites the distributions of these body sherds according to the test pits and various spit levels are summarised in tables 36 and 37 and Fig. 45.

Table 36

Obatamu (Ogrurug) site showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories (also see Fig. 44)

	SURFACE		Trench I		Trench II		Trench III		THE ENTIRE SITE	
	NO	%	No	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
<u>Rouletting</u>										
Twisted cord	1	1.13	3	0.4	6	0.8	13	1.74	23	3.07
Twisted frond	13	1.74	61	8.16	124	16.58	46	6.15	244	32.62
Grass string			2	0.27					2	0.27
Grooving			5	0.67	3	0.4	3	0.4	11	1.47
Incision			4	0.53	7	0.94	3	0.4	14	1.87
<u>Impression</u>										
Net	14	1.87	115	15.37	121	16.10	125	16.71	375	50.13
Blunt			2	0.27	2	0.27	2	0.27	6	0.80
<u>Perforation</u>										
Pre-firing							1	0.13	1	0.13
<u>Combination of decorations</u>										
Net/post-firing perforation			2	0.27			2	0.27	4	0.53
Carved roulette/grooving							1	0.13	1	0.13
Grass string/grooving			14	1.87	51	6.82	2	0.27	69	8.95
<hr/>										
TOTAL	748									

(i) Decorative motifs

Decorative motifs discernible on body sherds are similar to those on body sherds from the Umuekete, Ojuwo Ata Ogu, Oketekekini and Atida sites. Thus the same range of twisted cord (Fig. 46:1), twisted frond (Fig. 46:2), grass string (Fig. 46:3), grass string/grooving (Fig. 46:7) and net impression (Fig. 46:6) motifs are present. The only sherd with carved roulette recovered from Obatamu (test pit III level 5) has small depressed rectangles (Fig. 46:11). At Obatamu, as at the other sites grooving and incision produce horizontal ridges (Fig. 46:4) or lines (Fig. 46:5b). Few sherds (less than 5%) have incised vertical lines (Fig. 46:50). Blunt impression seems to have been mainly with flat object with a curved edge. The object produced small depressed semi-circles on the sherds (Fig. 46:8). At Obatamu post-firing perforations were also made through some sherds with net impression (Fig. 46:9).

(ii) Decorative techniques (tables 36, 37; Figs. 1 44, 45)

As at Atida, the most dominant technique is net impression which constitutes 50.13% of the decorative categories. This is followed by

Table 37 a

Spit Level	R O U L E T T E						I M P R E S S I O N						Pre-firing Perfor- ation		Net/Post Firing Perfor- ation		Carved Roul/ Grooving	Grass String/ Grooving	Un- clear	Total Dec.	Plain	Total Sherds (37a & 37b)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
	Twisted Cord		Twisted Frond		Grass String		Grooving		Incision		N E T		Blunt		Pre-firing Perfor- ation	No							%	No	%	No	%																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																															
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Surface	1	3.57	13	46.43								14	50																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													</

Table 37 b  
Obatamu (Oguruğu); showing number and percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels (sherds with unclear decorations are not included in the column of decorated sherds).

Pit III	1	1	3.85	4	15.38	1	3.85	18	69.23	1	3.85	1	3.85	3	26	140
2	2	10	4	20				13	65			1	5	2	20	32
3	1	9.09	2	18.18				8	72.72					2	11	26
4	4	22.22	4	22.22				10	55.55					2	18	35
5	2	2.27	28	31.82	.	1	1.14	3	3.41	51	57.95	1	1.14	5	88	150
6	3	8.57	4	11.43		1	2.86			25	71.43	1	2.86	1	35	80

Table 38

Obatumu (Ogurugu); showing thickness of  
plain and decorated body sherds.

Thickness		Plain	Twisted cord	Twisted frond	Grass string grooving	Net impre- ssion
4	No	9		3	24	4
	% of total	2.70		1.23	35.82	1.07
5	No	32	1	19	29	16
	% of Total	9.61	4.35	7.79	43.28	4.27
6	No	30	1	29	6	27
	% of Total	9.01	4.35	11.89	8.96	7.20
7	No	52	7	66	6	47
	% of Total	15.62	30.43	27.05	8.96	12.53
8	No	45	6	46	1	40
	% of Total	13.51	26.09	18.85	1.49	10.67
9	No	36	2	23		42
	% of Total	10.81	8.70	9.43		11.20
10	No	26	2	34	1	84
	% of Total	7.81	8.70	13.94	1.49	22.40
11	No	30	1	10		34
	% of Total	9.01	4.35	4.10		9.07
12	No	35	1	5		35
	% of Total	10.51	4.35	2.05		9.33
13	No	14	1	3		35
	% of Total	4.20	4.35	1.23		9.33
14	No	13	1	3		7
	% of Total	3.90	4.35	1.23		1.87
15	No	4		3		4
	% of Total	1.20		1.23		1.07
16	No	3				
	% of Total	0.90				
18	No	4				
	% of Total	1.20				
TOTAL		333	23	244	67	375

Measurements in millimetres

twisted frond (32.6%); grass string/grooving (8.95%) and then twisted cord (3.03%). Grass string/grooving does not occur at the surface but occurs in the three test trenches. The remaining three techniques occur at the surface as well as in the three trenches. Although sherds with incision (1.87%); grooving (1.47%); blunt impression (0.89%) are quite few, they occur in the three test trenches. Sherds with net impression/post-firing perforation (0.53%) occur only in pits I and III. One sherd with carved roulette/grooving (0.13%) and the other with pre-firing perforation (0.13%) were recovered from test trench III.

Net impression and twisted frond appear to be evenly distributed through the spit levels - occurring at the surface and in all the spit levels of the three test trenches. In trench I there is an increase in the percentage occurrence of twisted frond roulette in the upper levels (1-3) while the percentage occurrence of net impression seems to be greater in the two lower levels (6 and 7) of test pit I than in any of the upper levels (1-5). Net impression appears to be most numerous in all spit levels; followed for all the levels by twisted frond roulette. Grass stringing/grooving occurs in most of the spit levels but is absent from levels 3 to 6 in test pit III and level 5 in Trench I. While twisted cord which is also present in most of the spit levels is absent from levels 1 to 6 in Trench I and level 4 in Trench II. Grooving plus incision categories appear to be popular at Obatamu site especially as nearly all sherds with grass string roulette have grooves and the only sherd with carved roulette also has a ridge between the grooves. The other decorative categories are so scanty that not much can be deduced from their distribution pattern. For example, the presence of carved roulette and pre-firing perforation only in the lower levels (5 and 6) of test trench II and III may or may not be of any chronological significance. The four techniques - net impression, twisted cord, grass string/grooving and twisted cord (although absent from levels 1 to 6 in test pit I) - which are large enough for quantitative study show trends rather than any break in occurrence.

Few sherds show evidence of burnishing; only about 114 (10.55%) out of 1,081. 13 plain sherds have burnished internal surfaces while 31 have burnished external and internal surfaces and 70 decorated sherds have burnished internal surfaces.

### (iii) Thickness

Although measurements of the thickness of all the decorated and plain body sherds were taken, emphasis is laid on the analysis of five categories (twisted cord, twisted frond, grass string/grooving, net impression and plain sherds) which are large enough for quantitative study (see table 38).

This table suggests that a great percentage of the sherds have thickness as ranging from 6 - 10 mm (except sherds with grass string/grooving which have their thickness ranging from 4 - 8 mm). Sherds that are 7mm thick predominate amongst the plain sherds, twisted cord and twisted frond categories. Those that are 10mm and 15mm thick predominate among sherds with net impression and grass string/grooving respectively. As at Umuekete, sherds with net impression are generally thicker than other sherds. For example, a good number of sherd with net impression have their thickness ranging from 11 to 13mm. However, among the other categories (twisted cord, twisted frond and plain sherds) only few sherds have their thickness ranging from 11 - 18 mm. Sherds with grass string/grooving are

generally very thin when compared with others.

(iv) Colour

As at the other sites, the 1,081 sherds (plain sherds and sherds with identifiable decorations) recovered from Obatamu have the following colour ranges on both the external and internal surfaces; 572 (52.91%) range in colour from light reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5YR 6/4) to dark reddish brown (MUNSELL 2.5YR 2.5/4); 278 (25.72%) are dark grey (MUNSELL 2.5YR N4/1) to black (MUNSELL 2.5YR 2.5/) while 231 (21.37%) show a colour range from light reddish brown to dark reddish brown on their external surfaces and dark grey to black on their internal surfaces or vice versa.

(v) Temper

Ground potsherd and probably particles of sand (quartz grains), were used as temper. Particles of iron oxide (haematite) were found in some of the sherds; a few sherds have particles of iron oxide measuring between 4 to 7mm in diameter. The measurement of the size of the grit used as "temper" suggests the following ranges from less than 0.6mm in diameter to (0.6mm - 1.9mm) and to more than 9mm. As at the other sites the size of the grit cannot be correlated with the quality of the fabric.

Other sherds (besides rim and body sherds)

A piece of pot lid (Fig 41:9) was recovered from test trench II level 4.

Spindle whorls

The spindle whorls made of baked clay were recovered; one from level 17 of Umuekete site and the other from layer V of Ojuwo Ata Ogu. The spindle whorl from Umuekete is 45 cm high, 6mm thick at both ends, 22mm thick at the middle and has an internal diameter of 26mm (Fig. 27:5). That from Ojuwo Ate Ugu is 44mm high, 4.5mm thick at both ends, 13mm thick at the middle and has an internal diameter of 20mm (Fig. 27:5).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS OF FINDS OTHER THAN CERAMICS

#### A. FAUNAL REMAINS

The bones recovered from the excavations were studied by site and spit levels. For each level the bones were separated into identifiable and unidentifiable and each category was counted, weighed and examined to find out if it was burnt or not. The identifiable bones were then sorted into body parts and species. In identifying the bones, I was grateful for the help of Professors Charles Cleland, Larry Robins and Dr. John Onyango-Aguje. I used comparative specimens in the Zoology Museum of the University of Ibadan in collaboration with the Museum technologist.

Table 39

Faunal remains from Umuekete (Aguleri) site

Trench A1

Spit Level	Identification	Genus & Species	State of Preservation	No. of specimens	Weight (in gms)	Remarks
3	Bone fragment	unidentifiable	fragment	6	20	Burnt
5	Bone fragment	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	fragment	1	75	Burnt
	Rib "	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	fragment	1	5	Burnt
12	Phalange	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	whole	1	8	
	Distal end of metacarpal III	horse ( <u>Equus sp</u> )	fragment	1	15	
13	Bone fragment	unidentifiable	fragment	1	10	
	Rib fragment	hippopotamus ( <u>Hippopotamus amphibius</u> )	"	1	30	
17&18	Tooth (molar)	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	whole	1	17	
	Long bone fragment	unidentifiable	fragments	6	35	Burnt

Table 39 (contd.)

19&20	Rib fragment Distal end of metacarpals III or IV	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	fragment	1	7	
	Long bone fragment	unidentifiable	"	1	55	Burnt
			"	1	75	
6	Rib fragment	unidentifiable	fragment	1	25	
7	Long bone fragment	unidentifiable	"	1	31	
8	Long bone fragment	unidentifiable	fragment	1	43	
9&10	Footbone	baboon ( <u>Papio Anubis</u> )	whole	1	15	
11&12	Tooth	horse ( <u>Equus</u> sp)	"	1	11	
15&16	Large bone fragments	unidentifiable	fragments	2	82	
15&16	Rib fragment	unidentifiable	fragment	1	19	
	Neck bone (Vertebra)	goat/sheep (Ovicaprid)	almost whole	1	7	
BAULK	A1/A2					
Layer 4	Jaw with three teeth	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	fragment	1	77	

Table 40

Faunal remains from Oketekakini (Idah) site

Spit Level	Identification	Genus & species	State of Preservation	No. of Specimens	Weight in (gms)	Remarks
1	Bone fragments	fowl ( <u>Franco-linus bicalcaratus</u> )	fragments	5	6	
	Vertebra	fish	whole	1	-	
2	Jaw with five teeth	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	fragment	1	24	
	Vertebra	fish	"	1	0.5	
	Hip bone	cane rat ( <u>Thyromys swinderianus</u> )	whole	1	3	
3	Bone fragments	cane rat	fragments	3	4	
	"	fish	"	4	22	
	Jaw with four teeth	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	fragment	1	9	
4	Vertebra	"	whole	1	0.5	
	Bone fragment	fish	fragments	6	43	
	Jaw with three teeth	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	"	3	35	
5	Tibia fragments	goat/sheep	"	3	28	
	Femur	"	whole	1	5	
6	Bone fragment	fish	fragment	14	73	
	Jaw with three teeth	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	fragment	1	7	
	Bone fragments	fowl ( <u>Franco-linus bicalcaratus</u> )	fragment	8	14	
7	Bone fragments	Fish	fragment	10	72	
	Tibia	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	whole	1	7	

Table 40 contd.

8	Bone fragments	unidentifiable	fragments	4	19
9	Bone fragments	fowl ( <u>Francolinus</u> <u>bicalcaratus</u> )	fragments	6	28
10	Femur	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	fragment	1	127
13	Vertebra	fish	whole	1	12
	Bone fragments	"	fragments	3	10
14		fish	fragments	6	12
15	Bone fragments	fish	fragments	6	21
16	Femur	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	whole	1	7
	Long bone fragments	"	fragments	2	15
18	Bone fragments	fish	fragments	2	12
19	Bone fragment	fish	fragments	2	8
4	Long bone fragment	Unidentifiable	fragment	1	14
	Tooth	goat/sheep ( <u>Ovicaprid</u> )	"	1	1
	Bone fragment	fish	"	1	1

Table 41

Faunal remains from Atida (Ogurugu.

Spit	Identification	Species	State of Preservation	Number	Weight (in grams)
4	Long bone fragment	Unidentifiable	fragment	1	14
	Tooth	goat/sheep (Ovicaprid)	"	1	1
	Bone fragment	fish	"	1	1

Table 42

Faunal remains from Obatamu (Ogurugu) site

Pit I	Identification	Species	State of Preservation	Number	Weight in grams
1	Bone fragments	unidentifiable	fragments	4	12
	Jaw with two teeth	goat/sheep (ovicaprid)	fragment	1	2
5-6	Bone fragments	unidentifiable	fragments	15	12
Pit II					
2	Bone fragments	unidentifiable	fragments	4	35
	Teeth	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	whole	2	37
	Bone fragment	fish	fragment	1	-
3	Long bone fragments	undientifiable	fragments	17	30
	Tooth	cow ( <u>Bos taurus</u> )	whole	1	2
4	Bone fragments	unidentifiable	fragment	8	57

## B. Molluscs

41 cowrie shells were recovered from levels 2 to 10 at Oketekakini (Idah) site; 1 from level 4 at Atida (Ogurugu) site and 27 from levels 1, 3 and 4 in Pit I and levels 1 to 4 in Pit II of Obatamu (Ogurugu) site. These are all large shells. *Cypraea annulus*, said to have been imported from the East African island of Zanzibar (Johnson, 1970:117). They are smooth, ovoid in shape and about 18mm to 22mm long (see also Eluyemi, 1977:109).

From at least the 18th century AD *C annulus* is known to have been imported into parts of Nigeria (Eluyemi op. cit. 110-111) and by 1860 it is said to have displaced the small shells (*C. moneta*) in Lagos and as far inland as Abeokuta (Johnson op. cit. 4). Since 19th century AD Europegana smoking pipes were among the items recovered from the upper layers (I and II) of Oketekakini (Idah) site it is possible that the cowries were amongst the items imported. Situated as it is on the River Niger Idah had trading links with the Atlantic coast at least during the 19th century AD.

Table 43

Cowrie recovered from Oketekakini (Idah) site

Spit levels	Number	Weight (in grams)
2	7	6
3	8	9
4	4	4
5	5	7
6	5	7
7	1	1
8	4	4
9	66	7
10	1	1

As mentioned above, only one cowrie shell was recovered from Atida (Ogurugu) site. It weighs 1 gram.

Table 44

Cowries recovered from Obatamu (Ogurugu) site

	Spit levels	Number	Weight (in grams)
Pit I	1	9	11
	3	2	2
	4	1	1
Pit II	1	6	9
	2	8	10
	3	1	2

### C. Smoking Pipes

A number of smoking pipes were recovered from Oketekakini (Idah) site. European (imported) pipes were present from levels 1 to 9 while locally made (African) pipes occurred in the lower levels (12, 14, 15, 18 and 19). Thus, while the imported pipes were recovered from layers I and II, the African ones occurred in layers III and IV.

There are some basic differences between the European clay pipes and the locally made ones (Fig. 47). A European clay pipe is a single piece pipe made up of the bowl and a long thin stem while the locally made pipe is a two piece one with a clay bowl and short stem socket into which is inserted a long vegetable stem of bamboo or similar material. The European clay pipes are made in moulds while the locally made ones are handmade.

#### European Types

Certain features are common to the European pipes recovered from Oketekakini site; they are all bulbous bowled, the stem making a curve of almost 90° from the bowl. With one exception, all have either a foot or a spur and are elaborately decorated. Using five characteristics - bowl, stem, base, decoration, and maker's marks, five types are discernible:

Type 1: The one example from level 3 has neither foot nor spur, is stained brown and decorated with a rib-like design which begins from its middle and extends for 11mm to the stem (Fig. 47.1)

Type 2: This consists of pipes with feet and decorated with loaf and rib-like designs (Fig. 47:2). The pipes were recovered as follows:

Table 45

Type 2 European smoking pipes recovered from Oketekakini (Idah)

Levels	Complete Bowls	Incomplete Bowls	Stems	Complete pipe
2	1			
3	2	1		1
4				1
5		1	10	
6				
7		2	7	
8	1		4	
9	1			

The two incomplete bowls recovered from level 7 have inscriptions of 355 at the left hand side of their stems and 3 at the left hand side of the feet. One of the stems recovered from the same level has an inscription of 355 at its left hand side; the second S.McLA... on one side and ...HESTER on the other and the third MANCHESTER on one side and McLARDY on the other (Fig. 47:3).

Type 3: This is made up of a pipe (complete bowl still retaining its foot and stem) recovered from level 2. The bowl is covered with a stylized acorn (embossed) design and has a flower-like design at the base. One side of the stem bears an inscription J.WAL... and the other another inscription of ... ER. The piece is stained brown (Fig. 47:4).

Type 4: This is undecorated but has a foot (Fig. 47:5).

Type 5: This is made of one complete bowl recovered from level 9. It is smaller than others and has a short spur rather than a foot. It is decorated with a sailing ship on one side and an anchor at the other (Fig. 47:6). An incomplete bowl was recovered from level 6.

Local types: Among the locally made pipes similar decorative techniques/motifs are found on the various forms, hence decoration may not prove a useful index for classification. On the basis of form five types of the locally made pipes are discernible.

Type 1: Bowls are barrel shaped at the lower part, flaring out at the upper part and possess circular bases. One nearly complete pipe was recovered from level 14; three from level 15; three from level 18 and one from level 19 (Fig. 47:7).

Type 2: This type has a flat base to which is attached at each side of the back and in the centre of the front three projections extending slightly outwards giving the base a tripod. The stem has an angular collar. The bowl is very slightly tapered and the rim is slightly everted (Fig. 47:8). A nearly complete pipe was recovered from level 12.

Type 3: has a double angled base (Calvocoressi 1980: personal communication, Shinnie and Ozanne 1962, Fig. 47:9). A base fragment was recovered from level 18. Similar bases to this have been found by Patrick Darling between Benin and Ukpilla (Calvocoressi 1980: personal communication). These pipes were however, unstratified and undated. Three stems were recovered (one from level 12 and two from level 16). Neither of them had a collar (Fig. 47:10).

Generally, however, most of the locally made pipes have circular bases and steep angles between the bowls and the stems.

#### D. IRON WORKING DEBRIS

(i) Slag: Little iron slag was recovered from any of the sites. At Umuekete (Aguleri) small pieces of iron slag were recovered from levels 1, 12, 17 and 18 in trench A1, level 2 in trench A2 and levels 9 and 10 in trench 3. None was recovered from the baulks (see Table 1). At Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) two pieces of iron slag were recovered; one from layer I and the other from layer III (see Table 2). Only one piece of iron slag was recovered from level 11 of Oketekakini (Idah) site (see Table 3). No iron slag was recovered from any of the Ogurugu sites.

#### (ii) CLAY NOZZLES (tuyères)

Again few of these nozzles, often used in iron-working, were recovered from any of these sites. At Umuekete (Aguleri) parts of clay nozzles were recovered from levels 1 to 10 (except 6 and 7) in trench A1; levels 1 to 6 in trench A2; levels 1 and 2 in trench A3; layer 2 in baulk A1/A2 and layers 1 and 2 in baulk A2/A3 (see Table 15 and Fig. 26:4). At Ojuwo Ata Ogu parts were recovered from layers 1, 4, and 5 (see Fig. 17:6). One fragment was recovered from Trench II level 3 at Obatamu (Ogurugu) iron slag was still attached to it. (see Table 4 and Fig 43:10). None was recovered from Oketekakini (Idah).

#### (iii) LUMPS OF BAKED CLAY: POSSIBLY FROM OVEN WALLS

These occurred in large numbers in most sites. At Umuekete they were recovered from levels 1-18 (except levels 5 and 8); in trench A1 levels 1, 2, 4 to 6, 8 and 13; in trench A2 levels 3 and 4, 9 and 10; in trench A3 layer 2 in baulk A1/A2 and layer 4 in baulk A2/A3 (see Table 1). At Ojuwo Ata Ogu only two were recovered from layers I and V respectively (see Table 2). At Oketekakini they were recovered from levels 1-4, 7, 8, 14 and 18 (see Table 3) and at Obatamu from levels 1 to 6 in Trench I, levels 1, 3 and 4 in Trench II and levels 1, 5 and 6 in Trench III (See Table 4).

As can be discerned from the above evidence, iron slag, clay nozzles and fragments of ovens occurred only in the upper levels of trenches A1 and A2 at Umuekete (Aguleri). At Ojuwo Ata Ogu iron slag was present only in

layers I and III. At Oketekakini ? was recovered only from a lower layer while the oven fragments occurred in the lower and upper layers here and at Obatamu.

#### E. STONES

##### (iv) IRON ORE FRAGMENTS

Iron stone was recovered from all sites. At Umuekete they occurred in all the levels in trenches A1 (except levels 4, 6 and 7) and A2 (except levels 7 and 8). Pieces of stone were recovered from layer 2 in baulk A1/A2 but none in baulk A2/A3 (see Table 1). At Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Oketekakini sites iron stone fragments were recovered from all the layers and levels respectively (see Tables 2 and 3).

A few pebbles and much angular sand-stone came from all these sites but none of the stones show evidence of retouching.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INTERPRETATION OF THE EXCAVATED MATERIAL

Following on the study of the cultural materials and their distribution patterns in the five sites, I attempt here to reconstruct:

- (i) cultural sequence through time at each of the sites.
- (ii) specific activities decipherable from the cultural materials.
- (iii) inter-area relationships.

#### Cultural sequences through time

Umuekete: As noted in chapter three (p. ) the presence of iron slag, lumps of iron ore, possible furnace walls, fragments, and pieces of clay nozzles in the upper levels at the Umuekete (Aguleri) site (levels 1 - 18; layers I and II in trench A1 and levels 1 - 14; layers I and II in trench A2) suggest that two cultural phases could be present; one without and one with iron smelting/smithing. There is no evidence however of any cultural break between the upper (I and II) and the lower (III and IV) layers. The globular long necked pots (Type 2) and deep bowls with very short necks (Type 4) which appear in the upper layers of the trenches are very few for one to make any deduction from them. But as regards the decorative categories the largest figures of the blunt impression technique appear in the lower levels (19 - 23; layer III in trench A1 and levels 15 - 18, layers III and IV in trench A2). If this means anything at all, it is that the technique is of early rather than of late occurrence. The same appears to hold for the grooving technique. Both can be said to be amongst the early pottery decorative techniques practised in Aguleri area. Twisted frond and twisted cord roulettes, incision and net impression appear proportionately the most popular decorative technique but particularly the twisted frond roulette. However, twisted frond is rare in the lower levels while twisted cord and applied decoration predominate there. Also there seem to be more of the decorated sherds in the lower levels than in the upper levels of trench A1. With the decorative motifs there appear to be some differences between ones in the lower and those in the upper levels of trench A1. For instance, sherds with fine twisted cord motifs, concentric grooves and impressed triangles appear mainly in the lower levels.

Generally there is continuity in the occurrence of most of the decorative techniques/motifs in all the spit levels/layers of the trenches and baulks, but there are differences in the frequencies of occurrence of these decorative techniques/motifs. Such differences may suggest changes in the types of decorations prevalent at the site through time.

#### Ojuwo Ata Ogu

It seems from the cultural materials at Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) that only one cultural phase is represented here (see Chapter Three). The study of

the pottery shows that there is a high percentage of undiagnostic rim sherds, largely due to the fragmentary nature of the recovered rim sherds. The diagnostic rim sherds are so few that nothing can be deduced from their distribution pattern. Among decorated body sherds, there is continuity in the occurrence of such decorative categories as twisted cord, net impression and incision throughout the sequence. Sherds with pre-firing perforations occur at the surface and in layers 3, 4 and 5. Twisted frond, thumb impression and carved roulette decorative categories which have breaks in occurrence are too few for one to make any deduction.

#### Oketekakini:

At Oketekakini (Idah) site I discern two cultural phases with the help of cowrie shells and European imports (China ware, pieces of gin bottles and European smoking pipes) which are present in the upper layers (I and II). The earlier cultural phase was clearly local in character as these European imports were absent while the succeeding phase contained these European imports. Study of pottery and in particular the diagnostic rim sherds suggests that there is no typological break between the upper (I and II) and lower (III, IV and V) layers.

There is a reduction, however, in twisted cord roulette decoration from the lower to the upper layers corresponding to an increase in twisted frond roulette. There is also a possible decrease in grooving plus incision categories as one moves up the sequence but with a corresponding increase in impressions, particularly net impression. Sherds with grass string impression do not occur from levels 15 - 19 while those with sack impression (sacks being most probably European import) occur in the upper layers. The differences in frequencies of occurrence of these decorative techniques in the upper and lower layers may suggest changes in the types of decorations prevalent at the site through time.

#### Atida:

The cultural materials recovered from the Atida (Ogurugu) mound are so few that nothing can be deduced from their distribution pattern.

#### Obatamu:

The distribution of the cultural materials from Obatamu suggests one cultural phase for the site. With regards to the decorative categories, net impression and twisted frond appear to be evenly distributed through the spit levels - occurring at the surface and in all the spit levels of the three test pits. Grass string/grooving and twisted cord roulette appear in most of the spit levels in all the test pits. The other decorative categories are so scanty that not much can be deduced from their distribution pattern. Indeed the main decorative techniques show continuity in occurrence in the upper and lower levels of the test pits.

## Activities decipherable from the cultural materials

### Pottery

My analysis of pottery recovered from the archaeological sites shows that rim diameters of the bowls range from 16-30cm. Given the present day observations and oral information (see relevant ethnographic section in Chapter Four) hemispherical bowls with upturned rims (types 5 and 10) and those with inturned rims (types 6 and 7) with rim diameters ranging from 16-20cm could have been used for serving of food. Types 5 and 10 with rim diameters ranging from 20cm and above could have been mainly used for bathing or washing clothes while types 6 and 7 of this category could have been mainly used for preparing food, for example, preparing of yam pottage. Hemispherical bowls with everted rims (types 8 and 9) could have been used mostly for serving of food. The deep bowls (type 4) due to their depth were most probably used for cooking food or for storing food items like palm oil, melon. About 30-35% of the globular short necked pots (type 1) in trench A1 (Umuekete) and at Obatamu and Oketekakini sites have rim diameters ranging from 14cm and above. Such type 1 vessels could have been used for storage of water, wine and palm oil, smaller ones were most probably used for potterage of water and wine from the stream and market respectively. Ethnographic observations also show that globular long necked pots (type 2) are used mainly for storage of water or wine.

The analysis of the rim sherds and associated decorations in the five sites suggests that certain decorative techniques are predominant with certain types of vessels. The analysis shows that bowls with everted rims (types 8 and 9) used mainly for serving of food were often burnished and elaborately decorated with grooving technique (which produces different motifs) or at times with bossess (applied decoration). By contrast globular short necked (type 1) and globular long necked pots (type 2) were not burnished. This is not surprising because potters aware of the functions such pots are meant to perform choose to allow them to be porous. Porosity makes water/wine seepage possible and this has a cooling effect.

A few bowls with two pre-firing perforations at their rims were recovered from Obatamu (Ogurugu) site. Based on present day evidence such perforations were for hanging bowls to walls or in the part of the house where they were usually kept. It is possible on the other hand that these pots from Umuekete and Obatamu were connected with a type of hunting practised here. Until recent times the mouths of pots with post-firing perforations (with a charcoal fire in it) was put into the hole of a mouse. The hunter then blew through the perforation and smoke entered the mouse hole. This smoke makes the mouse dizzy; it then runs out and could easily be killed (Chief Nwokolo and Ogurugu elders Septemberr 1981: personal communication).

A study of the percentage occurrence of decorated and undecorated body sherds shows that apart from Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah), (with 56% undecorated as against 44% decorated body sherds), at the remaining sites (Umuekete, Oketekakini, Atida and Obatamu) decorated body sherds constitute more than two thirds (66.67%) of the total body sherds. This suggests a great preference for decorated pottery at Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah. This is in line with the present day evidence and also confirms the observation that apart from aesthetics, decoration has some functional value; for example, it makes for a firm grip of the pot.

A study of the thickness of body sherds from all the sites (Tables 16, 21, 28 and 38) suggest that a great percentage of the sherds have their thickness ranging from 5-10mm with those which are 7mm or 8mm thick predominating amongst all the categories except for sherds with net impression. Only few sherds have thicknesses ranging from 11-16mm or even up to 18mm. Given the differences in thickness between the vessels belonging to the first and second categories one may suggest the following: that vessels belonging to the first category (that is, thickness ranging from 5-10mm) were probably used for carriage of water and wine or for serving food while those belonging to the second category (that is, thickness ranging from 11-16mm) were used mainly for storage purposes. Occasionally this suggestion may not hold given the differences in craftsmanship of various potters and differences in the thickness of vessels coming from different localities. But where vessels come from one locality or nearby localities and most probably from potters with similar skill, differences in thickness more often than not depict activity differences (Derricourt 1973: 148) and this may account for the differences in the thickness of the vessels in these sites. In all the sites for example, sherds ranging from 5-10mm thick are more than twice the number of sherds with thickness ranging from 11mm and above. This seems to suggest that the second category of vessels used for storage were left in fixed position and therefore had longer life span, while the first category used for carriage of water, wine and for serving of food or for performing other domestic functions broke much more easily and were often replaced - hence their large number as reflected in the archaeological sites.

Sherds with net impression are generally thicker than those in all other categories. A great percentage of sherds with net impression have thickness ranging from 9-11mm with those which are 10mm thick predominating. This may be because net impression tends to be used as an overall decoration and overall decoration tends to be on large pots and large pots tend to have thick walls.

Present day potters in all the areas under study fire their pots in open fires - a process in which heat cannot easily be controlled. Differences in colour of pottery may therefore be due partly to differences in the types of clay used but is more likely due to differences in the firing conditions.

At all the sites ground potsherd was used as temper. Quartz grains and particles of iron oxides were also found in most of the sherds, but it is often difficult to distinguish between natural and added temper (except for ground potsherds), quartz, iron oxide and mica occur naturally in the clay.

Samples representing the principal fabrics were submitted to Dr Elueze and Mr Ochulo of Geology Department of the University of Ibadan. Twenty-five thin section slides were made, five from each site. Mineralogical analysis shows that all the potsherds contain quartz grains and iron oxides and that most of the quartz grains have thin films of selvages, cementing materials which could occur as a result of the addition of ground potsherds to the clay used in the pottery manufacture. Therefore, the mineralogical analysis seems to confirm my observations.

### Faunal remains.

A. Fish: A good number of fish bones were recovered only from Oketekakini (Idah) (Table 40). At Obatamu (Ogurugu) only two fish bones were recovered (Table 42) and none from Umuekete (Aguleri). Given the ethnographic information, fishing could well be of some antiquity here for, as stated earlier, the people of Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah still engage in fishing, although mostly on a part time basis and they make use of a variety of traps.

B. Mammals: The presence of bones of baboon and hippopotamus at Umuekete and of cane rats may have resulted from hunting activities. However, bones of domestic animals, cows, sheep/goat and fowl constitute the majority of bones recovered from the sites. This suggests much dependence on domestic animals as sources of protein.

The bones also suggest butchering, cooking and eating habits. Most of the long bones are broken, either to extract the bone marrow or in the case of the long bones to enable them to be contained in the cooking pots. Also some of the bones from Umuekete (Aguleri) site are burnt thus suggesting that the people either roasted their meat as well or ate near fire places.

A horse bone and a tooth were recovered from Umuekete. When horses were introduced into the Anambra valley is not known but it is generally assumed that they were not common in northern Nigeria until about 1000 AD.

Molluscs Cowrie shells (*Cypraea annulus*) were recovered from Oketekakini (Table 43), Atida and Obatamu (Table 44). Today, cowries are usually of ritual significance and are found mainly in shrines at Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah. However, *C. annulus* is known to have been used as currency in parts of Nigeria in the later part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries (Eluyeni op. cit.).

With the establishment of the West African Currency Board by the British in 1912 (Boahen 1966:40) metal coins began to displace cowries. Jeffreys (1948:46), however, still reports of the use of cowries as currency in Igboland and over much of Nigeria as late as 1930.

### Iron workings

Iron ore (especially haematite) occurs in most parts of Igboland and Igalaland. Iron slag, clay nozzles, possible furnace walls and lumps of iron ore were recovered from Umuekete (Aguleri) Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Oketekakini (Idah). These suggest iron smelting/smithing in Aguleri and Idah from at least the 13th century AD.

Taruga in Nok culture area, with shaft furnaces consisting of "thin-walled mud shafts over shallow pits" (Tylecote 1975:5) has the earliest evidence of iron working in Nigeria (440 BC). But recent findings at the two sites of Lejja (14km south of Nsukka) suggest that the iron smelters there made use of the pit or bowl furnace - "the earliest type of furnace known to have been used in Africa," (Anozie 1981: 9, 21). Anozie is of the opinion that there is no evidence that iron-smelting tradition in Igboland came from the Nok culture area.

In the present state of knowledge however, we are only aware that iron working and furnaces occurs in several places in Igboland and Igalaland and that smelting/smithing could have occurred in earlier times in these areas. Oral traditions suggest there was iron smelting/smithing in Awka in ancient times (Part I p. ) and Okafor (1976, 1-6) is of the opinion that the objects recovered from Igbo-Ukwu and Ezira in the 1st millenium A.D. "most probably owe their origins to the rich black-smithing traditions of Awka". But how far this is true is yet to be determined. At Umundu (Nsukka), about 60km from Ogurugu, the tradition of iron smelting dates most probably from 1625 AD (Anozie 1981: 48). The iron smelters used shaft furnaces slightly similar to the Taruga ones.

### Textiles.

The presence of spindle whorls at Umuekete (Aguleri) and Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) suggest that the people of Aguleri and Idah were spinning thread and weaving cloth as far back as the 13th century AD. It is perhaps significant that silk cotton trees still grow in these two areas.

### Trade

The presence of imported smoking pipes at Oketekakini (Idah) suggests European trading activities (either directly or indirectly) in the hinterland of Nigeria in the 19th century AD - activities made possible by the river Niger. Trade to the north is substantiated by remains of horse. Northrup (1972: 217-316) give reports of Igala traders of Idah and Adamugu in the first half of the 19th century bringing their horses from the Igala hinterland to sell at the Igala market near Asaba. Andah (in press) suggest that the Igbo may have obtained horses from the Igala before the 18th century AD. The presence of horse bone/tooth at Aguleri most probably suggest horse trading between the Igbo and their northern Igala neighbours from the 13th/16th centuries A.D.

### Inter-Area relationship

A lack of sufficient dates has hampered attempts at inter-regional correlations. Moreover in some cases the material available was too small to warrant definite conclusions; in particular the numbers of diagnostic rim sherds from Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Atida are inadequate. The figures for the decorative techniques are more satisfactory.

An attempt was made to ascertain by means of chi-square tests whether the sites can statistically be said to be similar. In the case of the Vessel Types the test was confined to Umuekete, Oketekakini and Obatamu and in the case of the Decorative Techniques all the sites were included. The test indicated that in terms of frequencies of occurrence of vessel types and the decorative techniques there are real differences between the sites but that in terms of the presence or absence of distinctive traits there is a real degree of similarity between the sites. Thus out of the 20 decorative categories enumerated, 9 (including carved roulette from Obatamu site) are common to at least 3 of the 5 sites investigated. Excluding the combined decorations; 8 out of the 11 decorations enumerated are common to a least 3 of the 5 sites investigated. Thus it can reasonably be claimed that there is a degree of communality between all the sites studied. It is

assumed that a study of the occurrence of vessel types and the decorative categories (in terms of their presence or absence in any of the sites), thickness of sherds and materials used as temper, will throw some light on the degree of relationship amongst the excavated pottery assemblages, (pottery being the main cultural material recovered from all the sites). It is further assumed that similarities in pottery and in other cultural materials from Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu (both belonging to the same time range) provide an indication of some degree of interaction between Aguleri and Idah from about the 13th - 16th centuries AD. Similarities between pottery from these two sites and pottery from Oketekakini, Atida and Obatamu sites suggest continuity in pottery technology in Anambra valley from about the 13th/16th to the 19th centuries AD.

(i) Vessel forms

Table 46

Number and percentage occurrence of vessel types in each of the sites (also see Tables 10, 17, 23, 29 and 33)

TYPES	UM		ATA		OK		AT		OB	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	311	70.05	8	36.36	38	18.91	3	42.86	32	39.02
2	2	0.45	2	9.09	4	1.42	—	—	1	1.22
3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	8.54
4	3	0.68	—	—	81	40.30	2	28.57	16	19.51
5	65	14.64	1	4.55	14	7.00	—	—	—	—
6	42	9.45	11	50.00	37	18.41	—	—	8	9.76
7	13	2.93	—	—	3	1.49	—	—	2	2.44
8	8	1.80	—	—	16	7.96	2	28.57	11	13.41
9	—	—	—	—	5	2.49	—	—	5	6.09
10	—	—	—	—	3	1.49	—	—	—	—
Total of Types	7		4		9		3		8	

Key:  
UM = Umuekete (Aguleri)  
ATA = Ojuwo Ata Ogun (Idah)  
OK = Okmetekakini (Idah)  
AT = Atida (Ogurugu)  
OB = Obatamu (Ogurugu)

Table 46 shows that seven vessel types were recovered from Umuekete and four from Ojuwo Ata Ogu. Although the sample from Ojuwo Ata Ogu is small (22 diagnostic rim sherds) the four vessel types from this site also occur at Umuekete. While globular short necked pots (type 1) are predominant at Umuekete (70.05% and occurring in almost all the spit levels in the three trenches); hemispherical and carinated bowls with slightly inturned rim (type 6) are dominant at Ojuwo Ata Ogu (50%; occurring at the surface and in layers 2,3 and 4). However, type 1 seems also popular at Ojuwo Ata Ogu (36.36%; occurring from layers 1 to 3). At both sites globular long necked pots (type 2) do not seem to be popular (0.45% and 9.09% at Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu respectively). Type 2 occurs only in levels 13 and 14 in trench A1 and in level 8 in trench A2 of Umuekete. At Ojuwo Ata Ogu type 2 is present only in layer 2.

The seven vessel types from Umuekete were also present at Oketekakini. However, carinated bowls with everted rims (type 9) and carinated bowls with upturned rims (type 10) are absent at Umuekete but occur at Oketekakini. Deep bowls with very short necks (type 4) are dominant at Oketekakini (40.30%; occurring in almost all the spit levels), but type 1 is also popular at this site (18.91%; occurring in almost all the spit levels).

Types 1, 4 and 8 (bowls with everted rims) which occur at Atida are also present at Umuekete and Oketekakini. Types 4 and 8 are, however, absent from Ojuwo Ata Ogu.

Eight vessel types are present at Obatamu. Globular narrow mouthed long necked pot (type 3) are present at Obatamu but absent from all other sites. Except for bowls with upturned rims (types 5 and 10), all other vessel types which are present at Umuekete, Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Oketekakini are also present at Obatamu. Globular short necked pots (type 1) are dominant at Obatamu (39.02%; occurring at the surface and in most of the spit levels in test pits I and II and in level 5 in test pit III). Deep bowls with short necks (type 4) are also popular (19.51%; occurring in most of the spit levels in test pits I and II and in levels 5 and 6 in test pit III).

Generally, studies of the diagnostic rim sherds from all the sites suggest continuity in pottery forms through time in each of the sites.

## (ii) Decoration

Table 47

Number and percentage occurrence of decorative categories  
in each of the sites (also see tables 14, 20, 26, 31 and 37)

Decorative categories	UM		ATA		OK		AT		OB	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Twisted cord roulette	479	8.17	361	82.61	190	20.45	3	4.76	2	3.07
Twisted frond roulette	3990	68.05	6	1.37	467	50.27	3	6.35	244	32.62
Grass string roulette	-	-	-	-	47	5.06	5	7.94	2	0.27
Carved roulette	4	0.07	1	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net impression	731	12.47	24	5.49	26	2.80	36	57.14	375	50.13
Mat impression	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	15.87	-	-
Blunt/Thumb impression	60	1.02	2	0.46	12	1.29	-	-	6	0.80
Impress made with a tubular object	-	-	-	-	1	0.11	-	-	-	-
Sack impression	-	-	-	-	4	0.43	1	1.59	-	-
Incision	161	2.75	13	2.97	66	7.10	2	3.17	14	1.87
Grooving	178	3.04	8	1.83	16	1.72	2	3.17	11	1.47
Pre-firing perforation	18	0.31	9	2.06	12	1.29	-	-	1	0.13
Post-firing perforation	13	0.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Applied decoration	34	0.58	-	-	4	0.43	-	-	-	-
Twisted cord/incision	-	-	13	2.97	78	8.40	-	-	-	-
Twisted frond/incision	195	3.33	-	-	3	0.32	-	-	-	-
Twisted frond/pre-firing	-	-	-	-	3	0.32	-	-	-	-
Grass string/grooving	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	8.95
Net/post-firing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.53
Carved roul/grooving	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.13
Total of Categories	11		9		14		8		11	

A total of twenty decorative categories (and at least twenty-eight distinct decorative motifs) were identified from all the sites: 11 (with at least 17 decorative motifs) at Umuekete; 9 (with at least 11 decorative motifs) at Ojuwo Ata Ogu; 14 (with at least 17 decorative motifs) at Oketekakini; 8 (with at least 9 decorative motifs) at Atida and 11 (with at least 14 decorative motifs) at Obatamu. As has been shown in Chapter Four, most of these decorative motifs are common to all sites; very few are peculiar to a few sites and only one or two continued to one site.

Table 47 shows that twisted cord roulette is predominant at Ojuwo Ata Ogu (82.61%); this is followed by net impression and then incision. These three decorative categories occur in all the stratigraphic layers (incision, however, does not occur in layer 6). Twisted frond is not significant at this site (it occurs only in layer 2). At Umuekete twisted frond roulette is the dominant technique (68.05%); this is followed by net impression and thirdly by twisted cord roulette. These three techniques occur at the surface and in almost all the spit levels and layers in the various trenches and baulks.

Such decorative categories as post-firing perforations, applied decoration, blunt impression and twisted frond/incision found at Umuekete are absent from Ata Ogu while twisted cord/incision found at Ata Ogu is absent from Umuekete.

All decorative techniques found at Ata Ogu are also present at Oketekakini. Except for post-firing perforations and carved roulette all techniques found at Umuekete are also found at Oketekakini. Twisted frond roulette is the most popular technique (50.27%) at this site as is the case at Umuekete. Also at Oketekakini twisted frond is followed in popularity by twisted cord roulette and net impression. These three categories are present in almost all the spit levels of this site. Grass roulette and sack impression which occur at Oketekakini are absent from both Ata Ogu and Umuekete. A single sherd with impressions formed by a tubular object was recovered from Oketekakini and is therefore not of significance. Combined decoration of twisted frond/pre-firing perforations at Oketekakini is absent from Ata Ogu and Umuekete. Twisted frond roulette increases in the upper levels (1.18 in trench A1; 1-12 in A2) at Umuekete and appears only in an upper layer (layer 2) of Ojuwo Ata Ogu. At Oketekakini twisted frond increases from the lower (levels 10 - 19) to the upper levels (levels 1-9). This seems to suggest a continuous increase in the use of this technique in these parts of the Anambra valley from about the 13th century AD onwards.

At Atida (Ogurugu) net impression is the dominant technique (57.14%) while mat impression and twisted frond roulette are also significant. At Obatamu (Ogurugu) grass string/grooving are present; these are not found at any of the other sites. Applied decoration and twisted frond/incision categories present at Umuekete and Oketekakini are not found at Obatamu. Sack impression present at Oketekakini is also absent from Obatamu. At Obatamu just as at Atida net impression is the most dominant decorative technique (50.13%). This is followed by twisted frond roulette. These two categories are present in almost all the spit levels of the three test pits.

Five decorative categories (twisted cord, twisted frond, net impression, incision and grooving) are common to all the sites; seven - twisted frond, twisted cord, grooving, incision net impression, blunt impression and pre-firing perforations are common to Obatamu, Umuekete,

Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Oketekakini sites. Sack impression is present at Atida and Oketekakini. While mat impression is peculiar to Atida site impressions made by a tubular object are peculiar to Oketekakini.

### iii. Thickness/temper

As stated before, the thickness of the majority of the body sherds from all the sites ranges from 6 - 10 mm and the sherds which are 7 or 8 mm thick predominate. Examination of the sherds suggests that ground potsherd was used as temper in all the sites. Similarities in the thickness of the sherds and the material used as temper suggests some similarities in the techniques of pottery manufacture in Aguleri, Idah and Ogurugu areas.

This study thus reveals strong elements of similarity in the pottery recovered from the Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu sites in terms of forms, decorative techniques/motifs and techniques of manufacture. The same can be said of pottery from these two sites and that from Oketekakini, Atida and Obatamu sites.

It is pertinent to mention that only four pieces of sherds with carved roulette technique was recovered from Umuekete out of the 5,863 sherds with identifiable decorations and only one from Ojuwo Ata Ogu out of 437 sherds with identifiable decorations. At Obatamu out of 748 sherds with identifiable decorations only one sherd with carved roulette/grooving technique was recovered. David and Vidal (1977: 51, also see pages 44-53) in their study of carved roulettes and their distribution in time and space pointed out that the

"first adequately documented appearance of carved rouletting is contemporary with that of iron metallurgy in the Nok culture entity of northern Nigeria"

and suggest that the bulk of its recent distribution in West, Central and East Africa can be derived from this source. Further research may show the validity or otherwise of this comment but the presence of insignificant numbers of carved rouletted sherds at Umuekete, Ojuwo Ata Ogu and Obatamu seems to suggest that carved rouletting was an intrusive element in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah areas. But whether such a technique was introduced to Aguleri from the north as suggested by David's and Vidal between the 13th and 16th centuries AD, is difficult to determine.

A decorative technique peculiar to the Anambra valley is net impression. There is no report of its occurrence in the Niger delta sites or in any site in Nigeria. It seems that the use of fishing nets on the Anambra river most probably led to their being used for pottery decoration. The presence of sherds with net impression at the Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu sites may suggest either similar fishing activities in the Aguleri and Idah areas or interactions amongst the people of these areas between 13th to 16th centuries AD.

It is very noticeable that pottery from Aguleri, (except for pottery with concentric grooves from the lower layers of Umuekete), Ogurugu and Idah lacks the sophisticated and intricate decorations found at Igbo-Ukwu, Benin (Connah 1975 and the Niger Delta (Nzewunwa 1980), and the surface treatment of the Afikpo (Chikwendu 1976). It is likely that the emphasis on grooving at Igbo-Ukwu and to some extent at Benin and Afikpo resulted in the

production of the intricate motifs (which, depending on the craftsmanship of the potter, are very easily produced with grooving technique). At Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah rouletting and net impression are the dominant techniques and these can hardly produce such sophisticated or intricate motifs. In terms of forms, most of the vessel types recovered from Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah can be matched at Igbo-Ukwu, Benin, Afikpo and the Niger Delta sites.

It is very noticeable also that pottery from Aguleri (except to some extent pottery with concentric grooves recovered from the lower layers of Umuekete site), Ogurugu and Idah lacks the sophisticated and intricate decorations of Igbo-Ukwu (Shaw 1970), Benin (Connah 1975) and the surface treatment of the Afikpo (Chikwendu 1976) and the Niger Delta (Nzewunwa 1980) pottery. It is likely that these sites (Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah sites on the one hand and Igbo-Ukwu, Benin, Afikpo and Niger Delta sites on the other) exhibit some differences because they are separated in time or space or both. It is also likely that the emphasis on grooving technique at Igbo-Ukwu and to some extent at Benin and Afikpo sites resulted in the production of the intricate motifs (which depending on the craftsmanship of the potter are very easily produced with grooving technique). At Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah rouletting and net impression are the dominant techniques and these hardly produce such sophisticated or intricate motifs. In terms of forms, most of the vessel types recovered from Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah are also available at Igbo-Ukwu, Benin, Afikpo and the Niger Delta sites.

The presence of spindle whorls and iron smelting/smithing debris at Umuekete and Ojuwo Ata Ogu suggest similar technological activities in Aguleri and Idah from about the 13th to 16th centuries AD. Whether such similarities are due to contacts between the two areas or not is difficult to determine but the presence of a horse at Umuekete may suggest commercial activity between them, from about the 13th/16th centuries AD.

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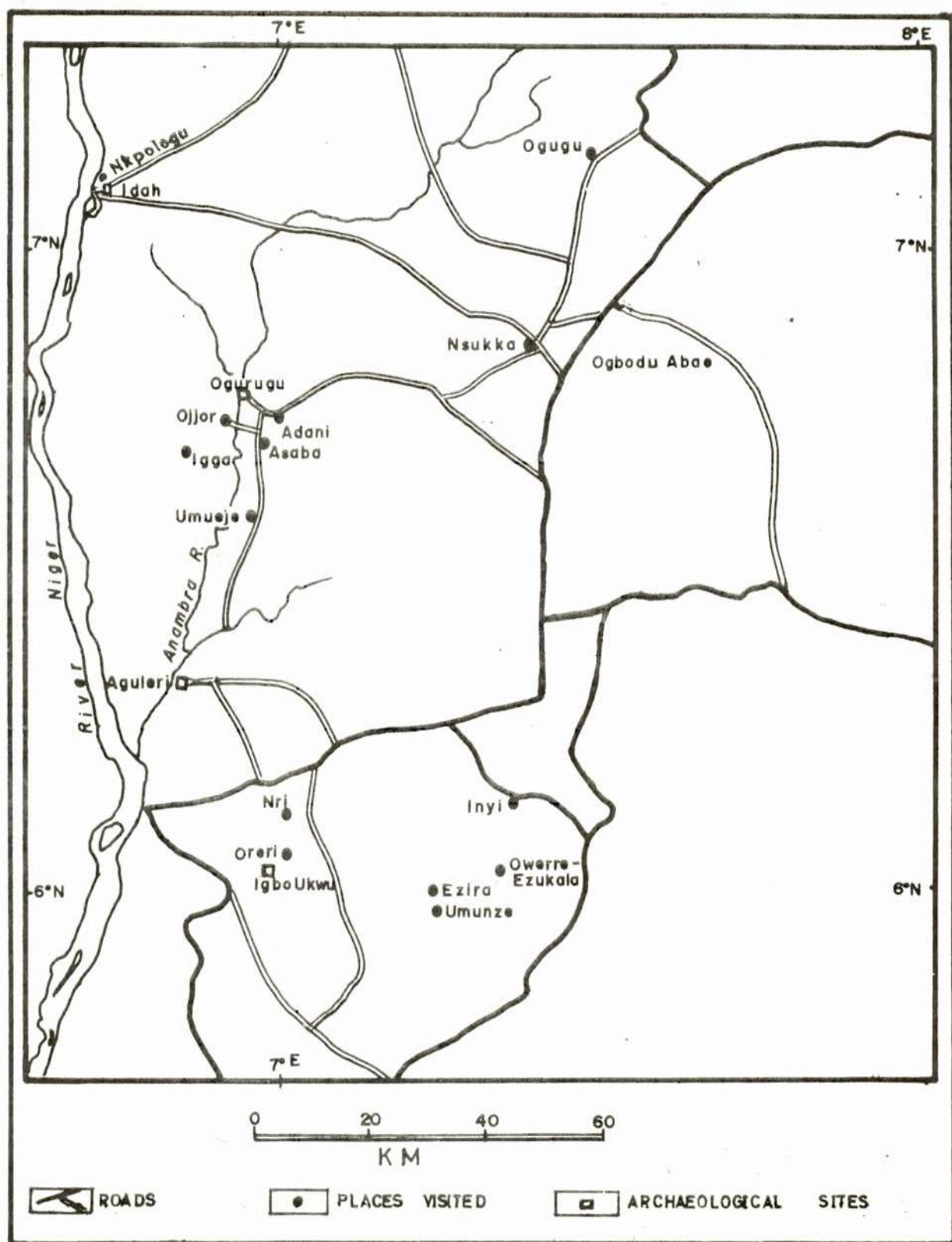


FIG. 1: Location of archaeological sites and places visited. (Adapted from Nsukka S.W. sheet 267. Printed by Federal Surveys, Nigeria 1964).

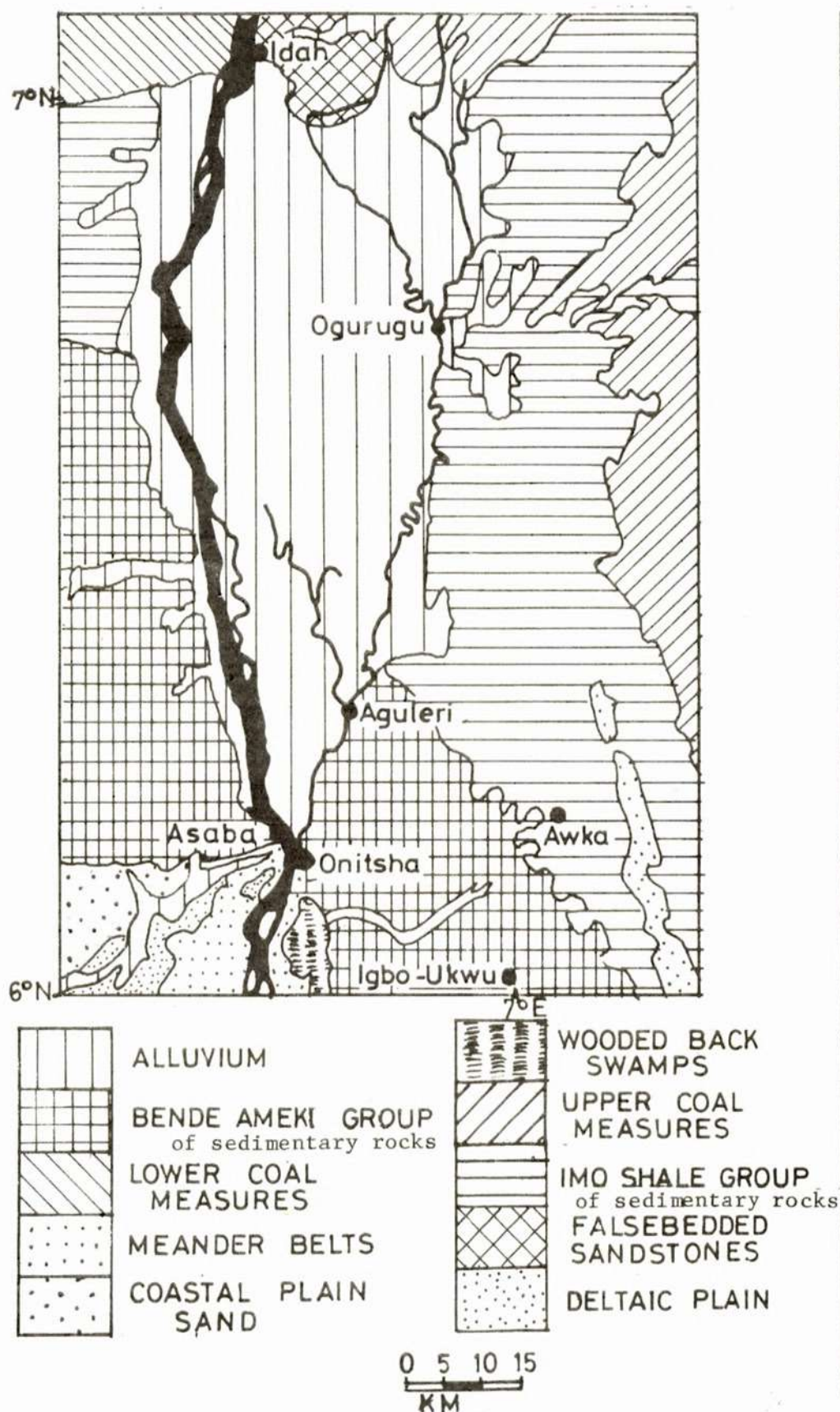


FIG. 2a: Geological Map of Anambra Valley and its Environs (Adapted from Geological series - Onitsha sheet 71 - Printed by Shell-BP Petroleum Development Co. of Nigeria Ltd., 1962).

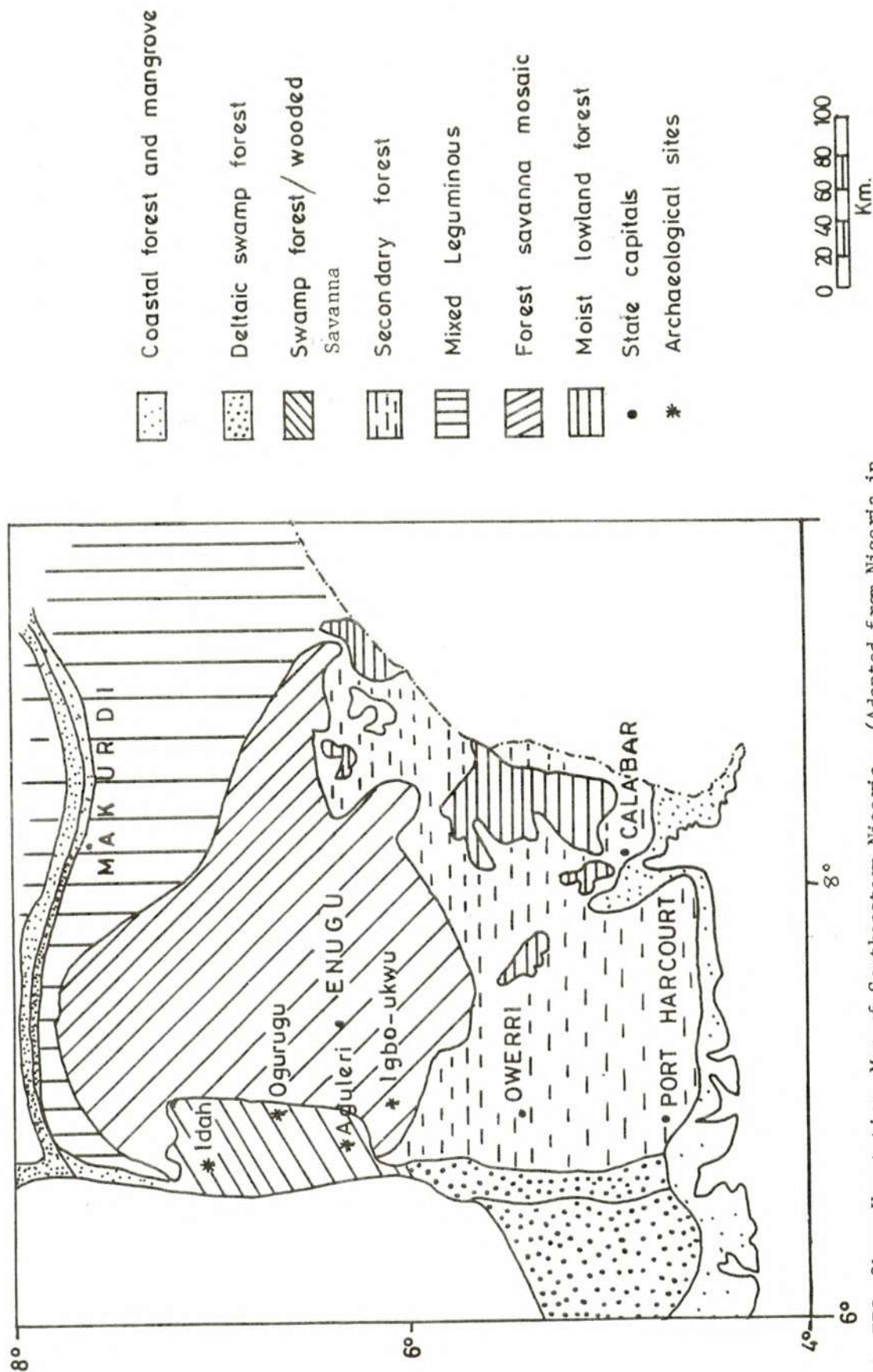


FIG. 2b: Vegetation Map of Southeastern Nigeria. (Adapted from *Nigeria in Maps: 1982* (eds.) Barbour, K.M., Oguntuyinbo, J.S., Onyemelukwe, J.O.C. and Nwafor, J.C.)

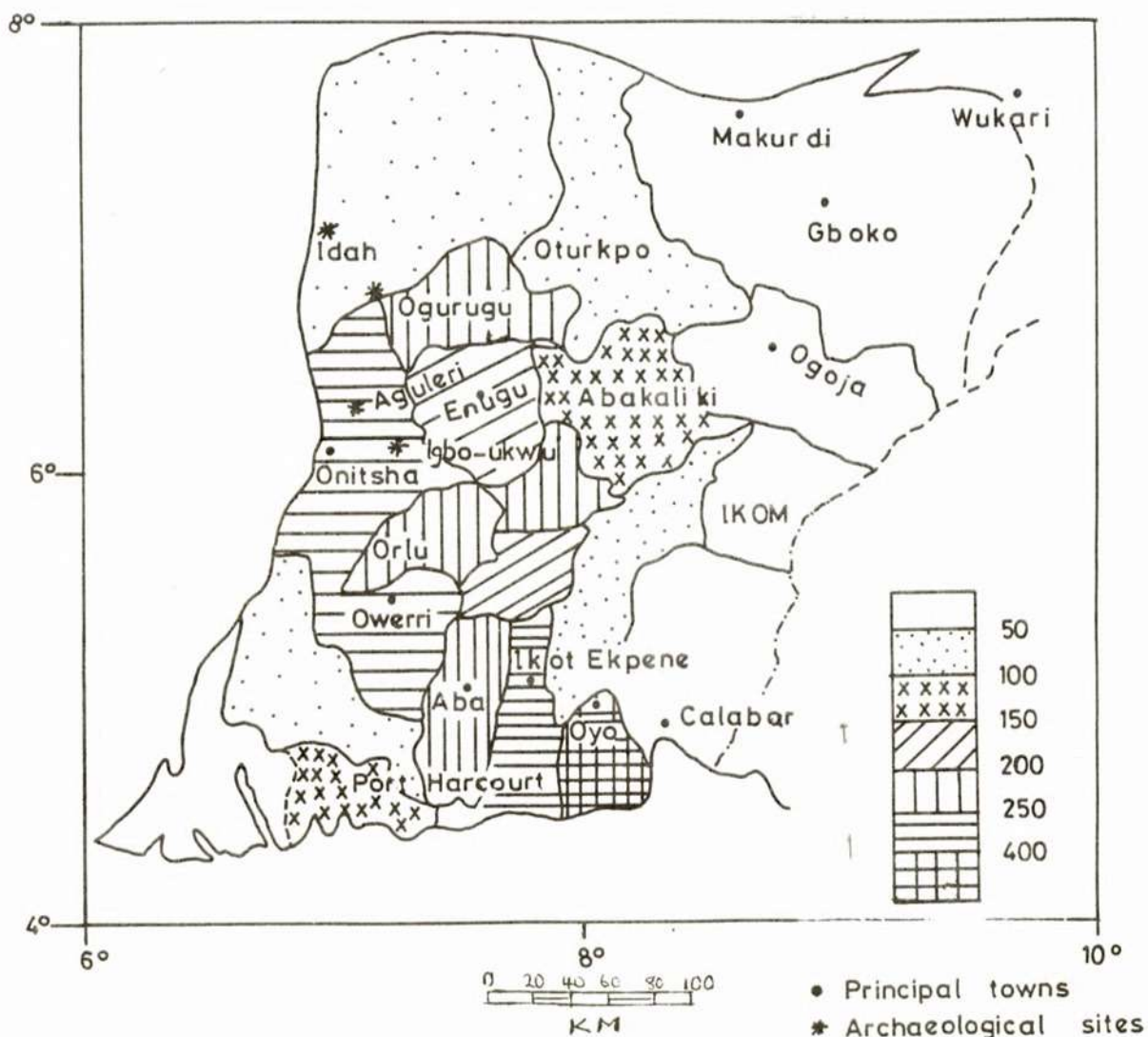


FIG 2c: Population Density map of Southeastern Nigeria (Adapted from *Nigeria in Maps*: 1982).

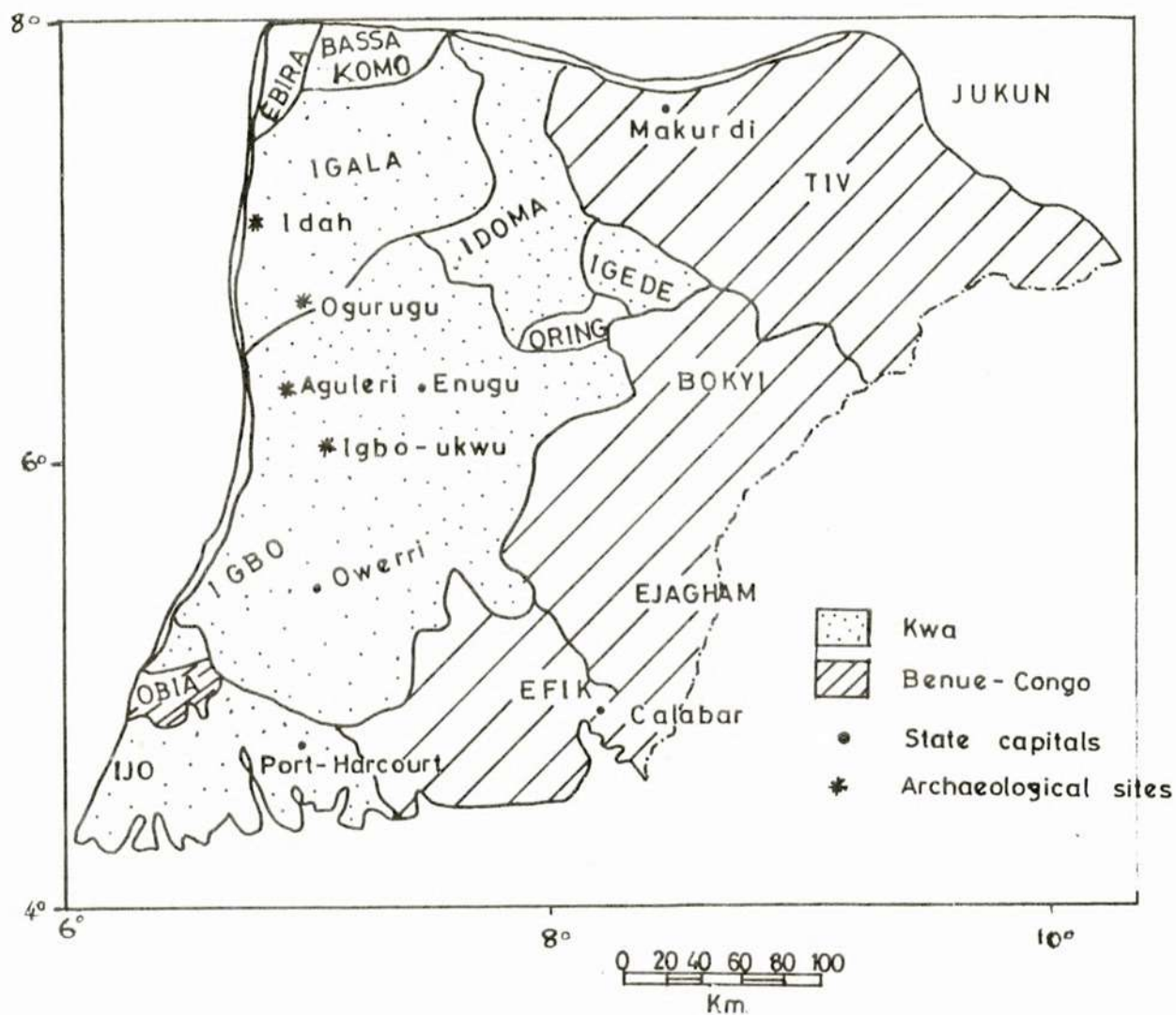


FIG. 2d: Linguistic boundaries in Southeastern Nigeria (Adapted from *Nigeria in Maps*: 1982).

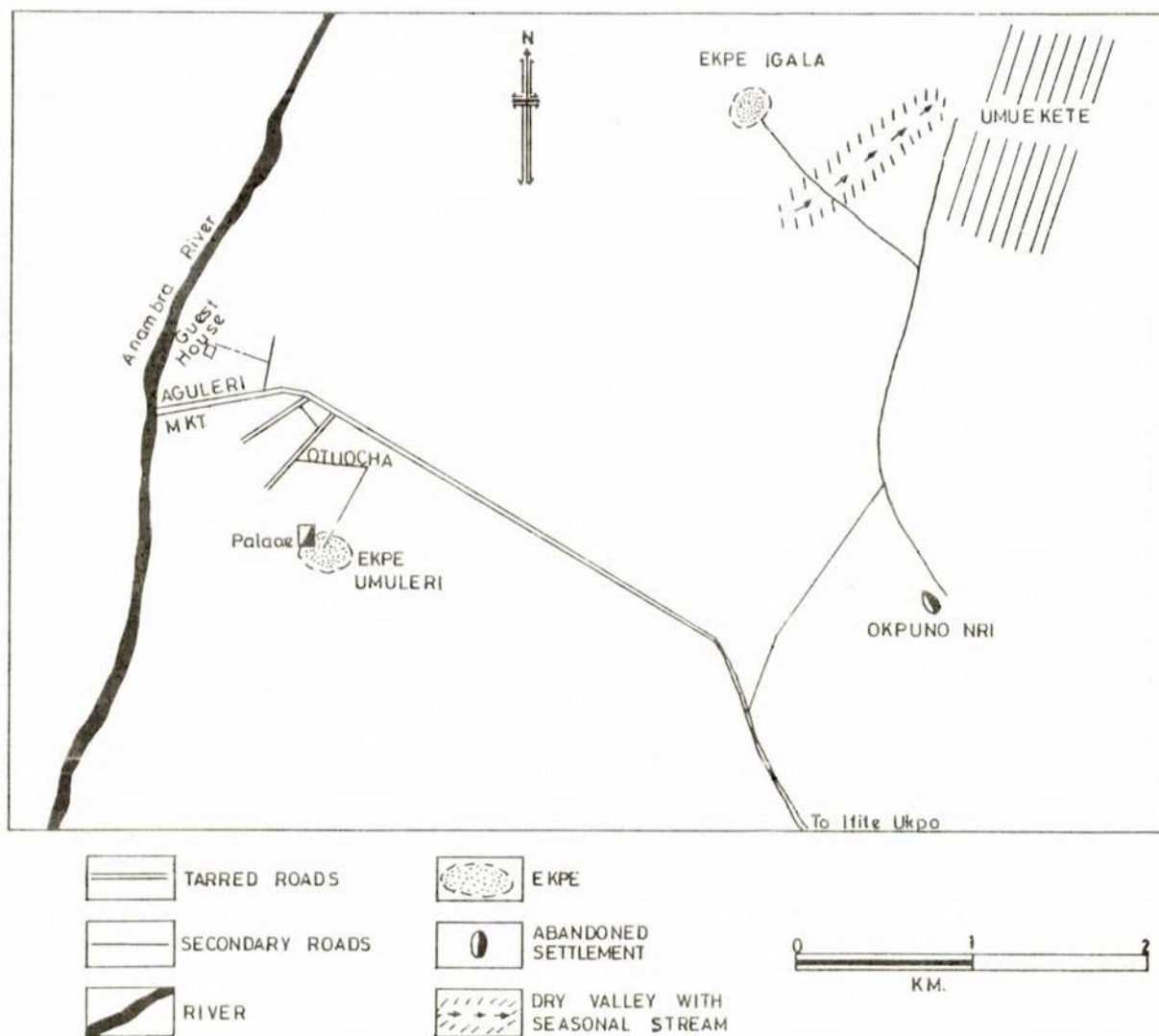


FIG. 3: Map of Aguleri showing sites located.

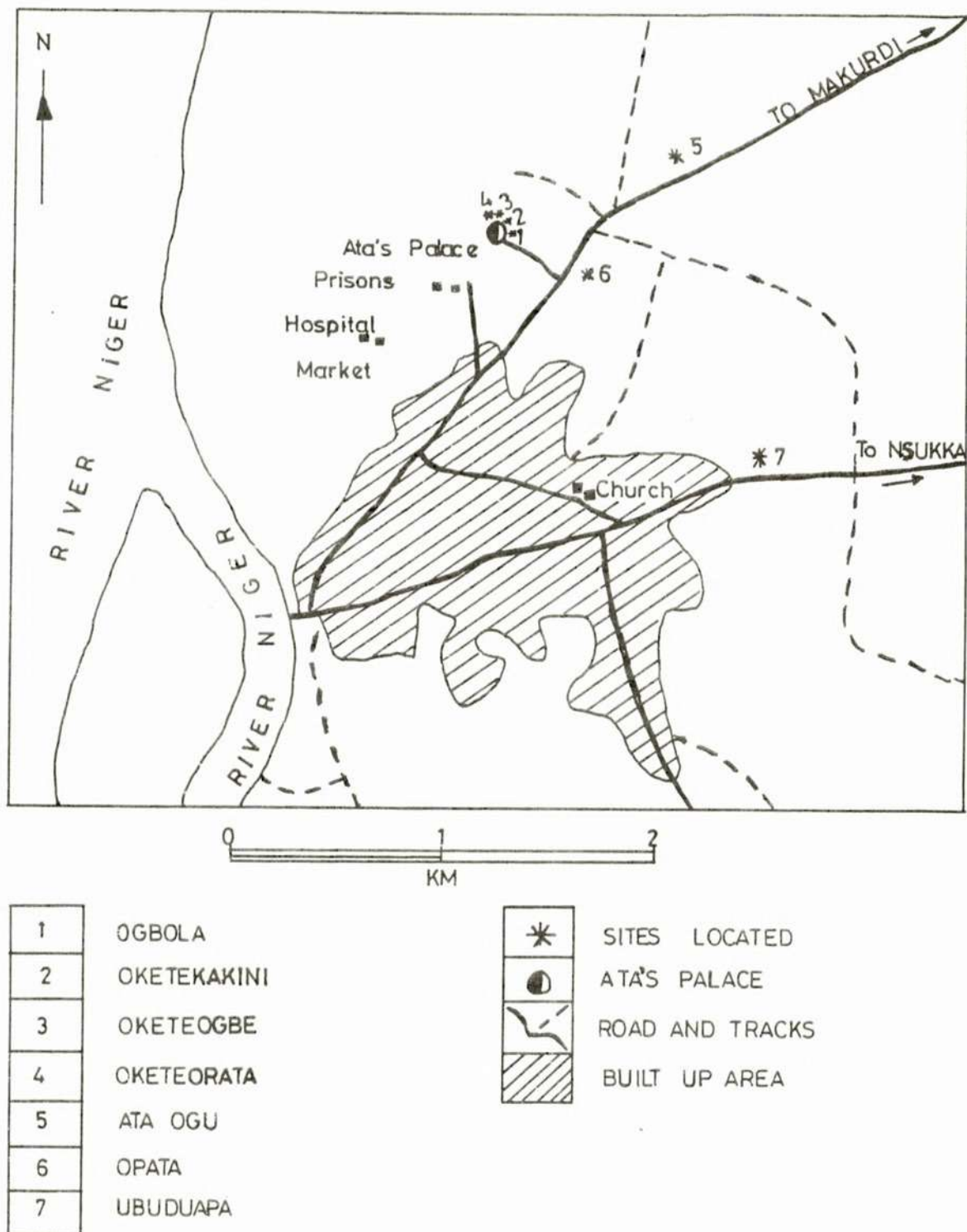
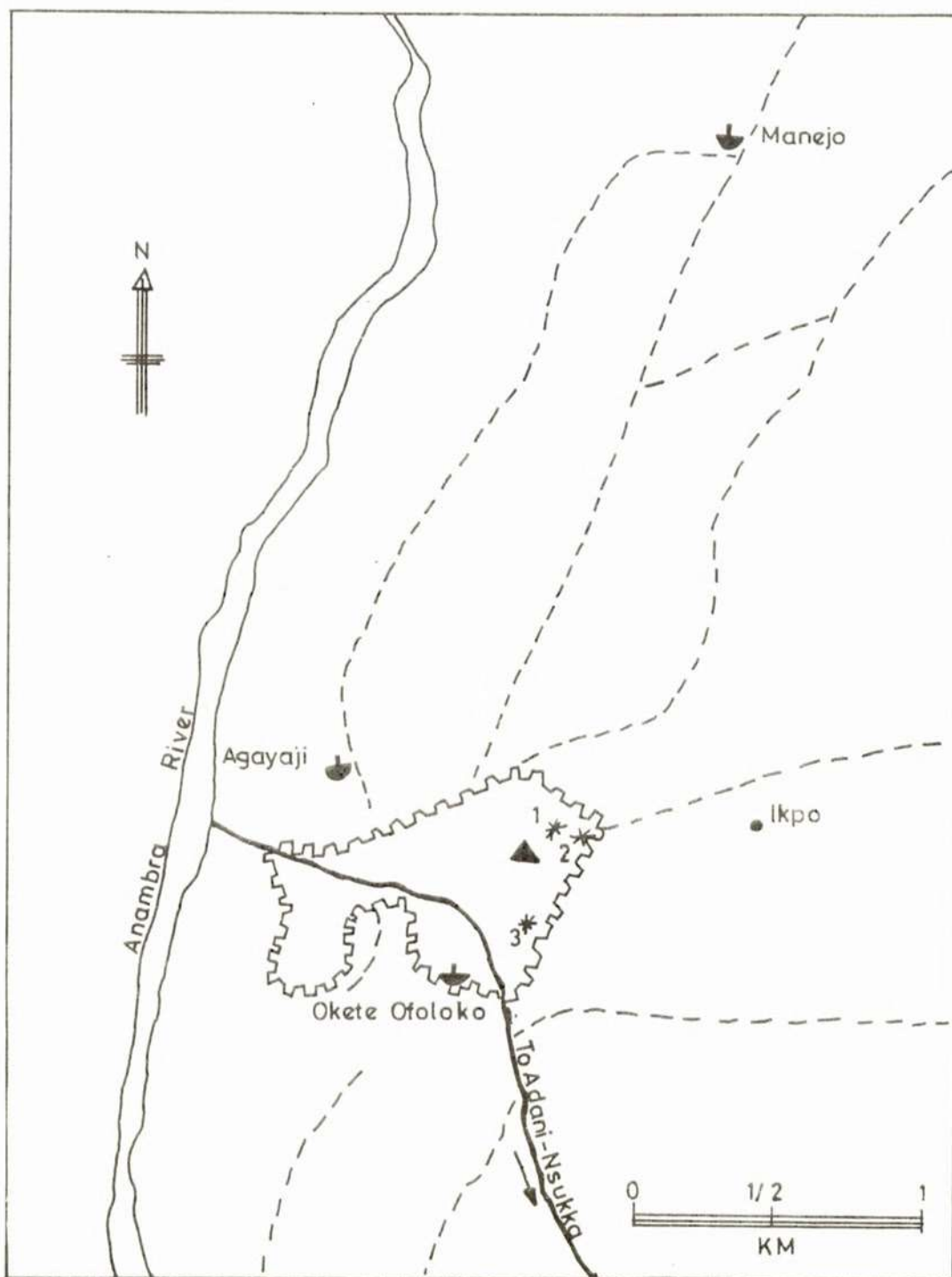
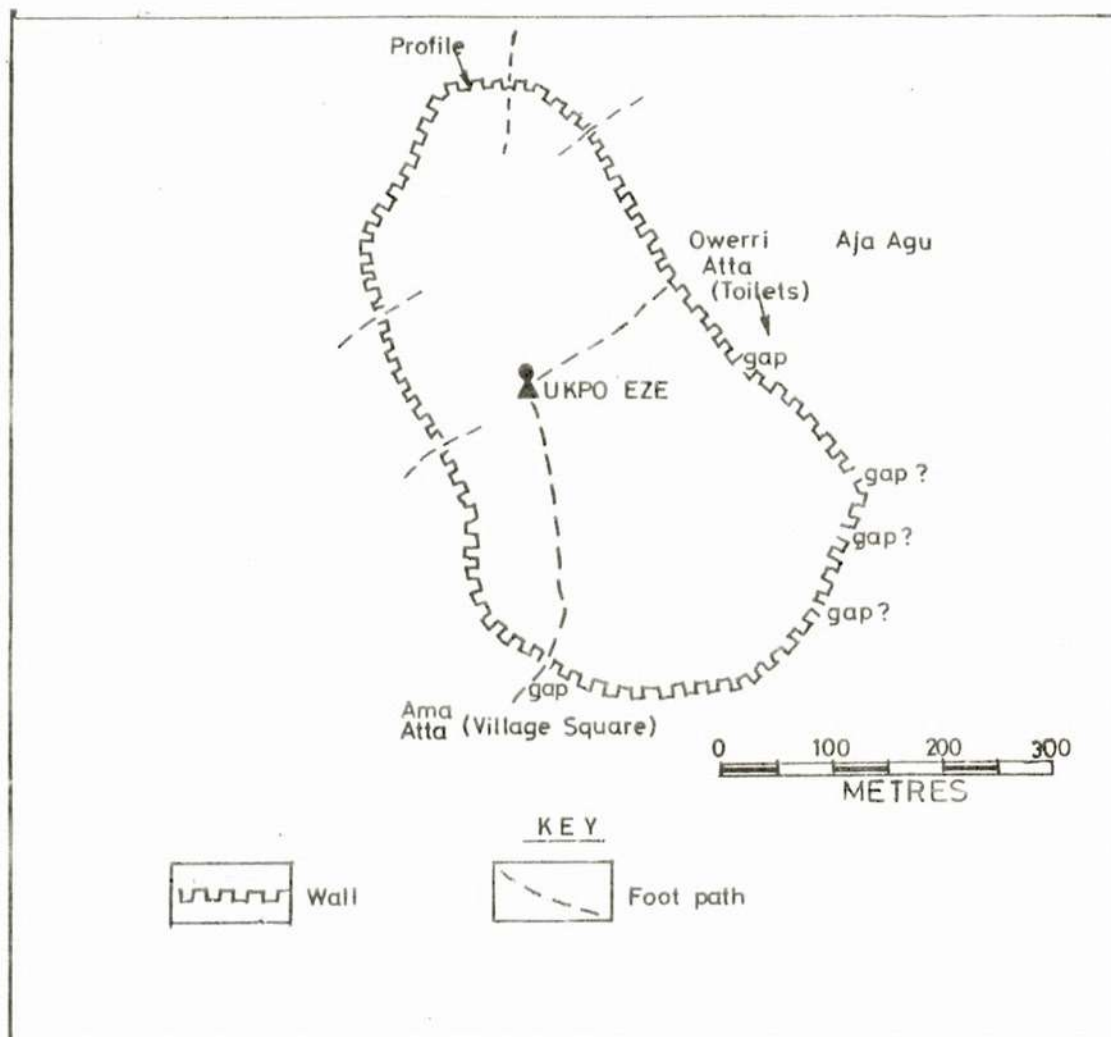


FIG. 4: Map of Idah showing the sites located (Adapted from Idah S.W. sheet 267. Federal Surveys, Nigeria 1964).



●	Former Dyeing Centre	⬇	Abandoned Settlements
*	Mounds	⬆	Town Wall
1	Atida	▲	Agu Onoja Compound
2	Omadane	—	Road & Track
3	Obatamu	- - -	

FIG. 5: Map of Ogurugu showing the sites located (Adapted from Nsukka S.W. sheet 287. Federal Surveys 1964).



adapted from Anozie and Darling (1977)

FIG 6: Umuekete (Aguleri) site showing the walled area.

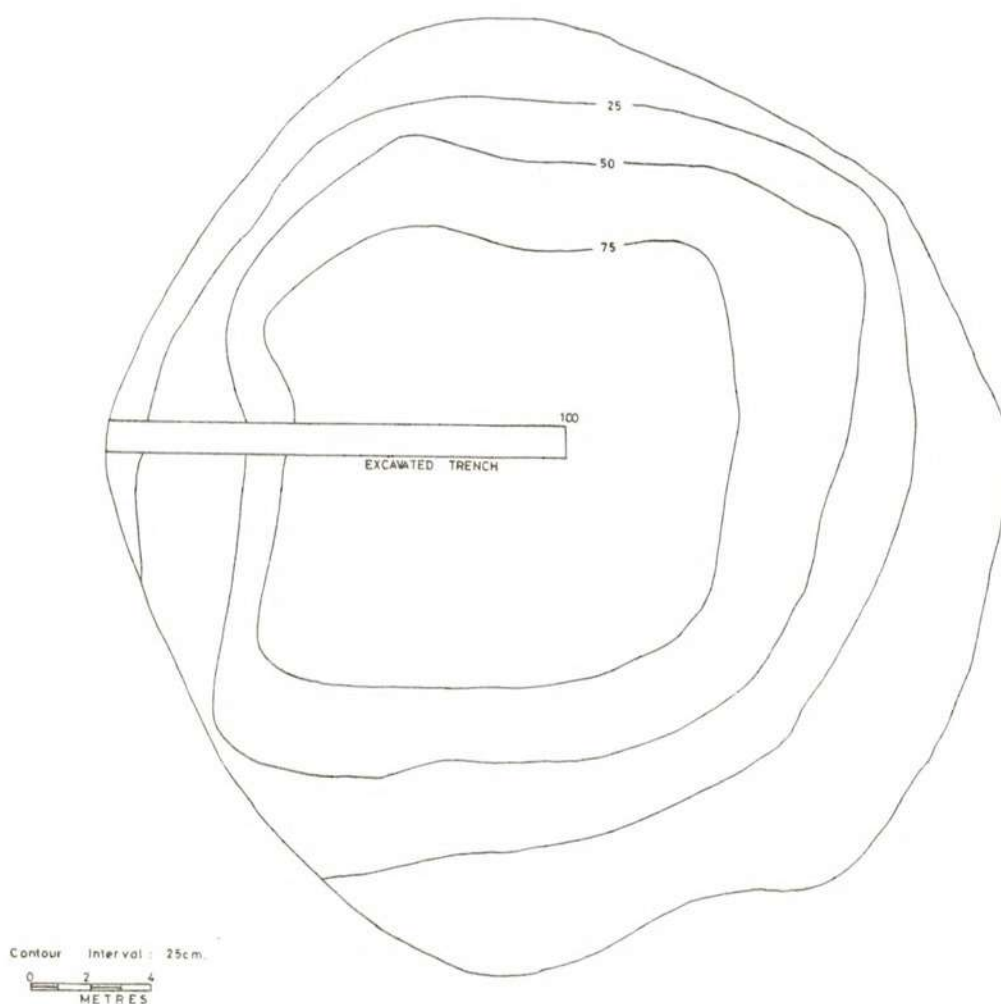


FIG 7: Contour map of Umuekete (Aguleri) mound showing the excavated area.

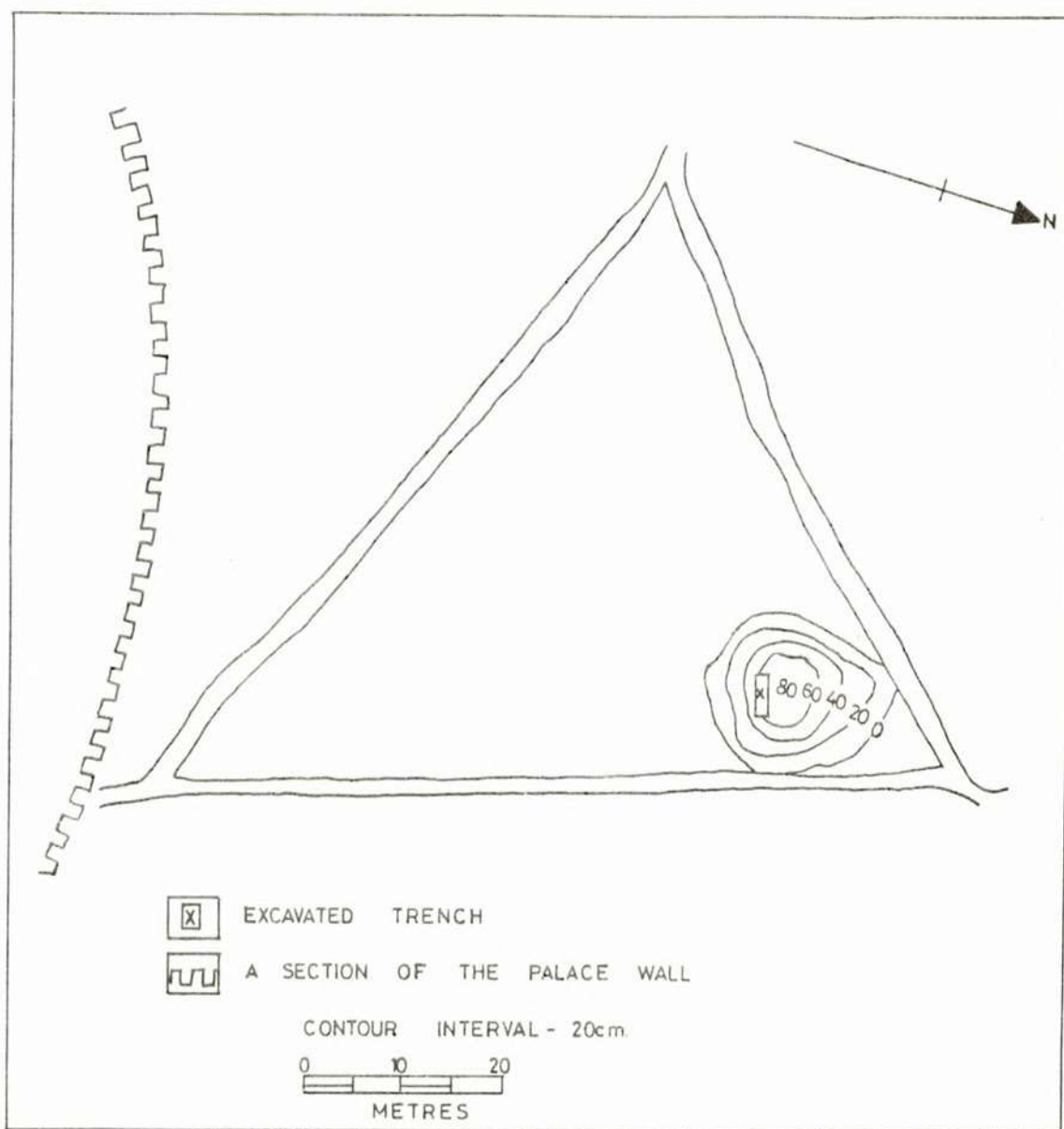


FIG. 8: Contour map of Oketekakin (Idah) mound showing the excavated area.

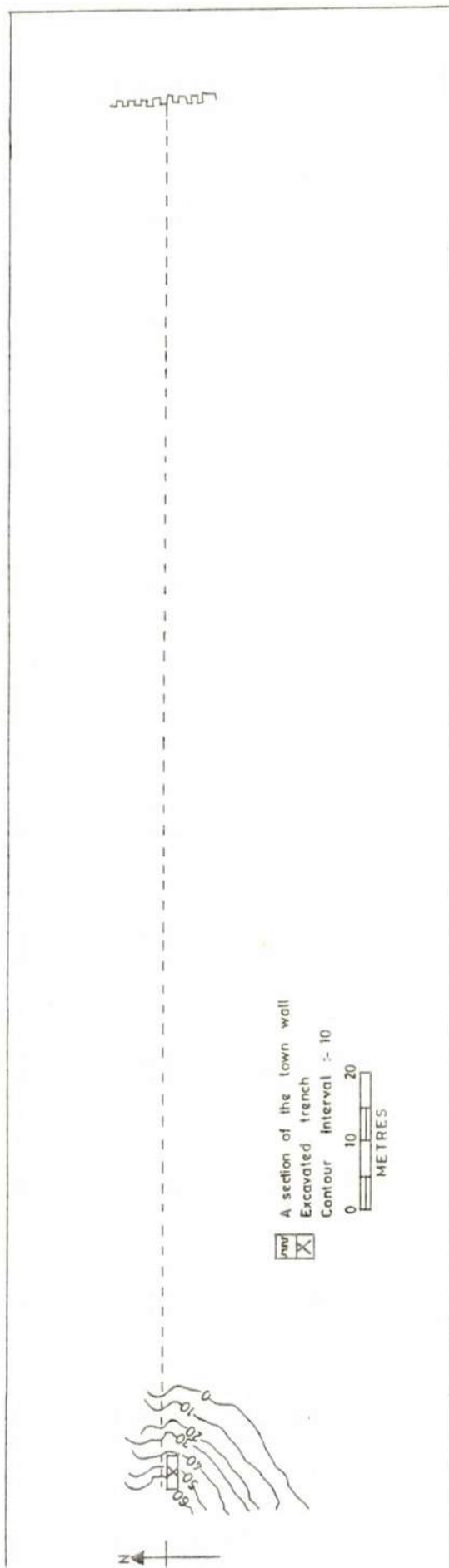


FIG. 9: Contour map of Atida (Ogurugu) mound showing the excavated area.

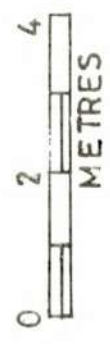
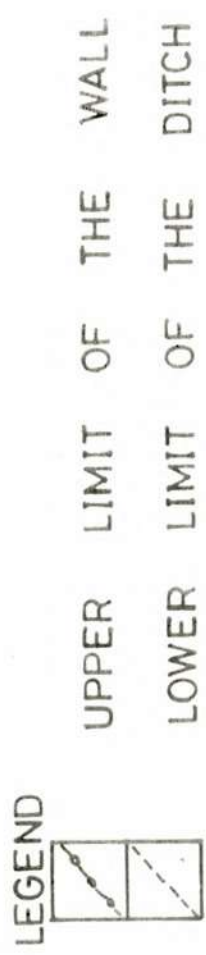


FIG. 10: A cross-section of Ogurugu town wall.

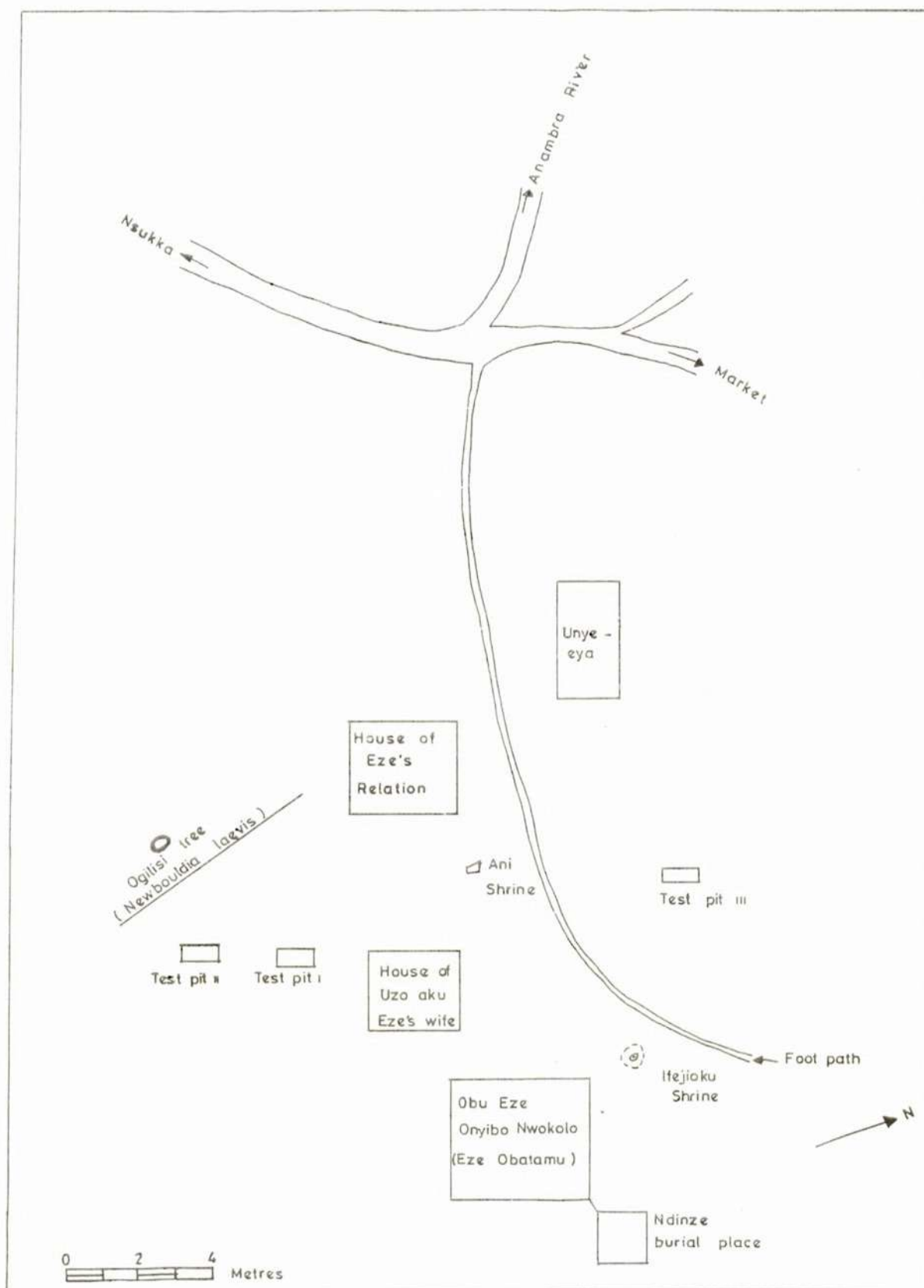


FIG. 11: Site Plan showing the location of Obatumu (Ogurugu) excavated areas.

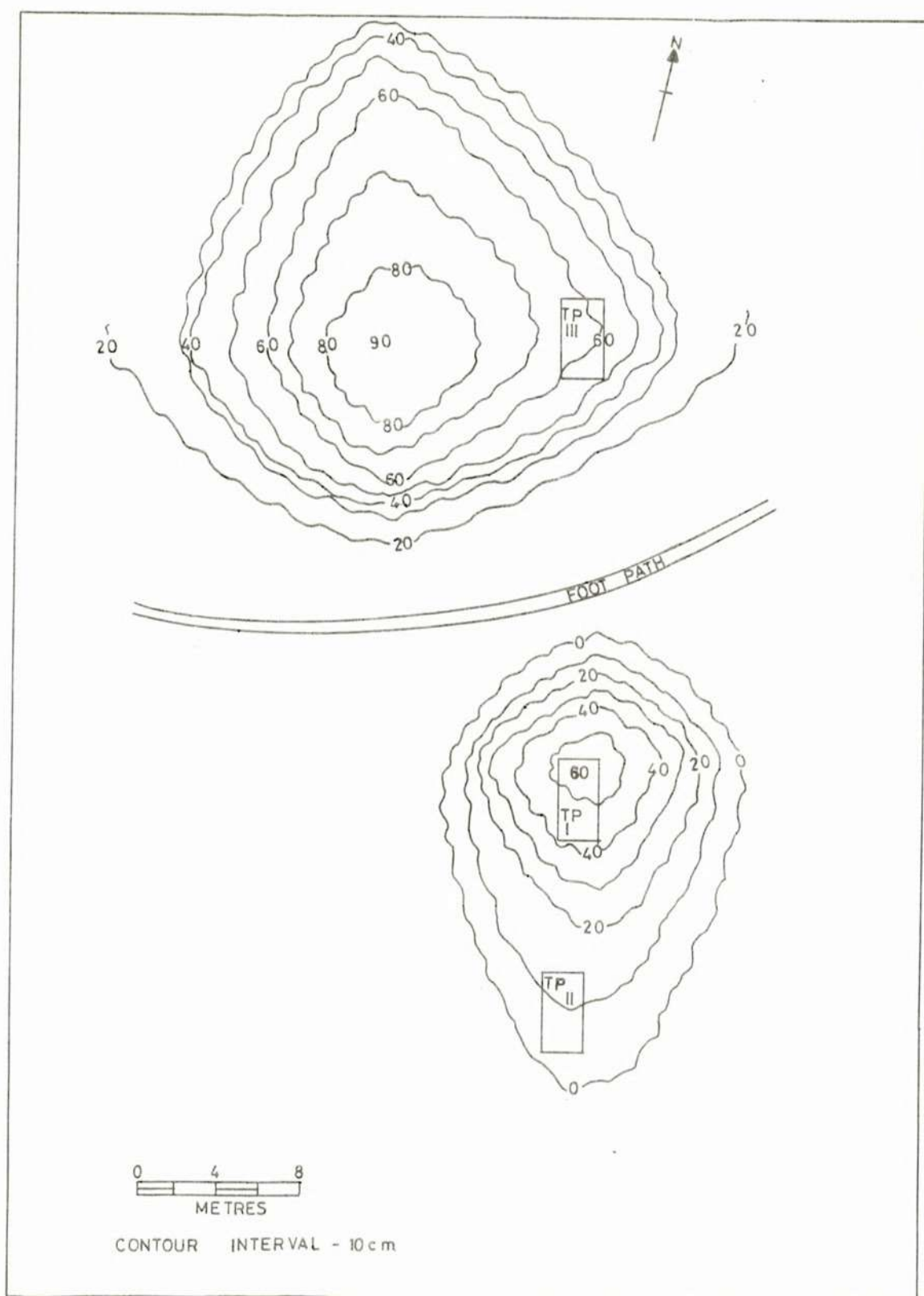


FIG. 12: Contour map of Obatumu (Ogurugu) mounds showing the excavated areas.

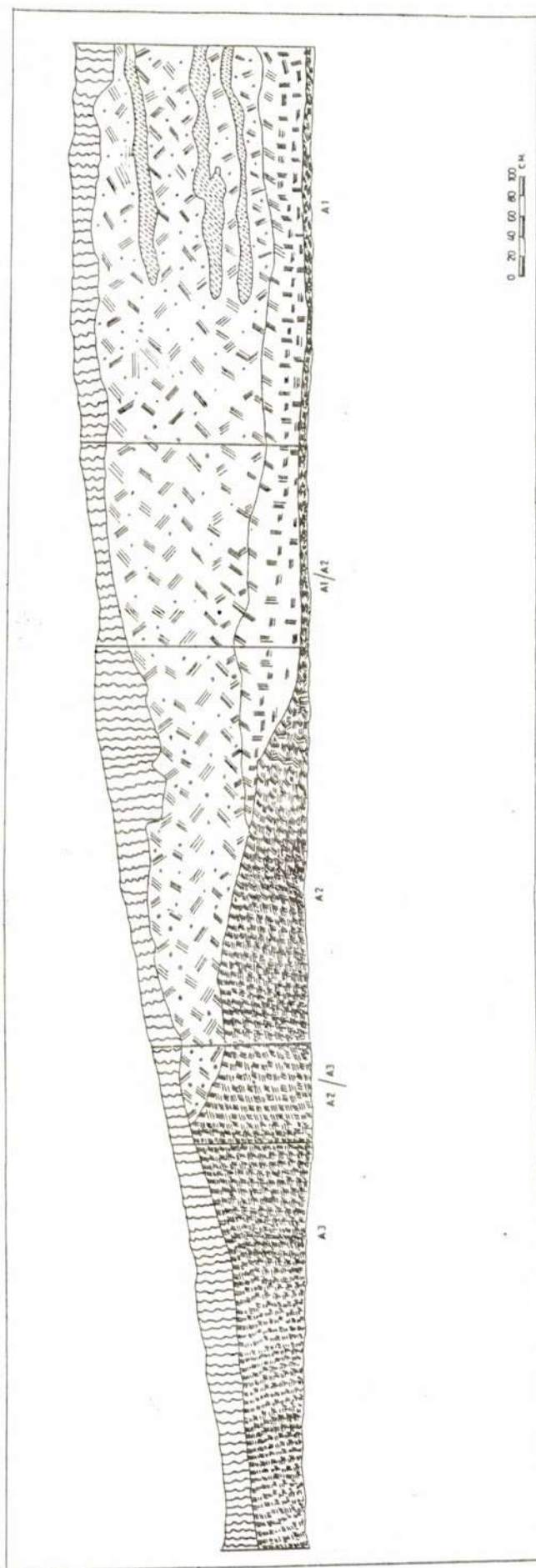


FIG. 13: Section drawing of Umuekete (Aguleri) mound; western wall.

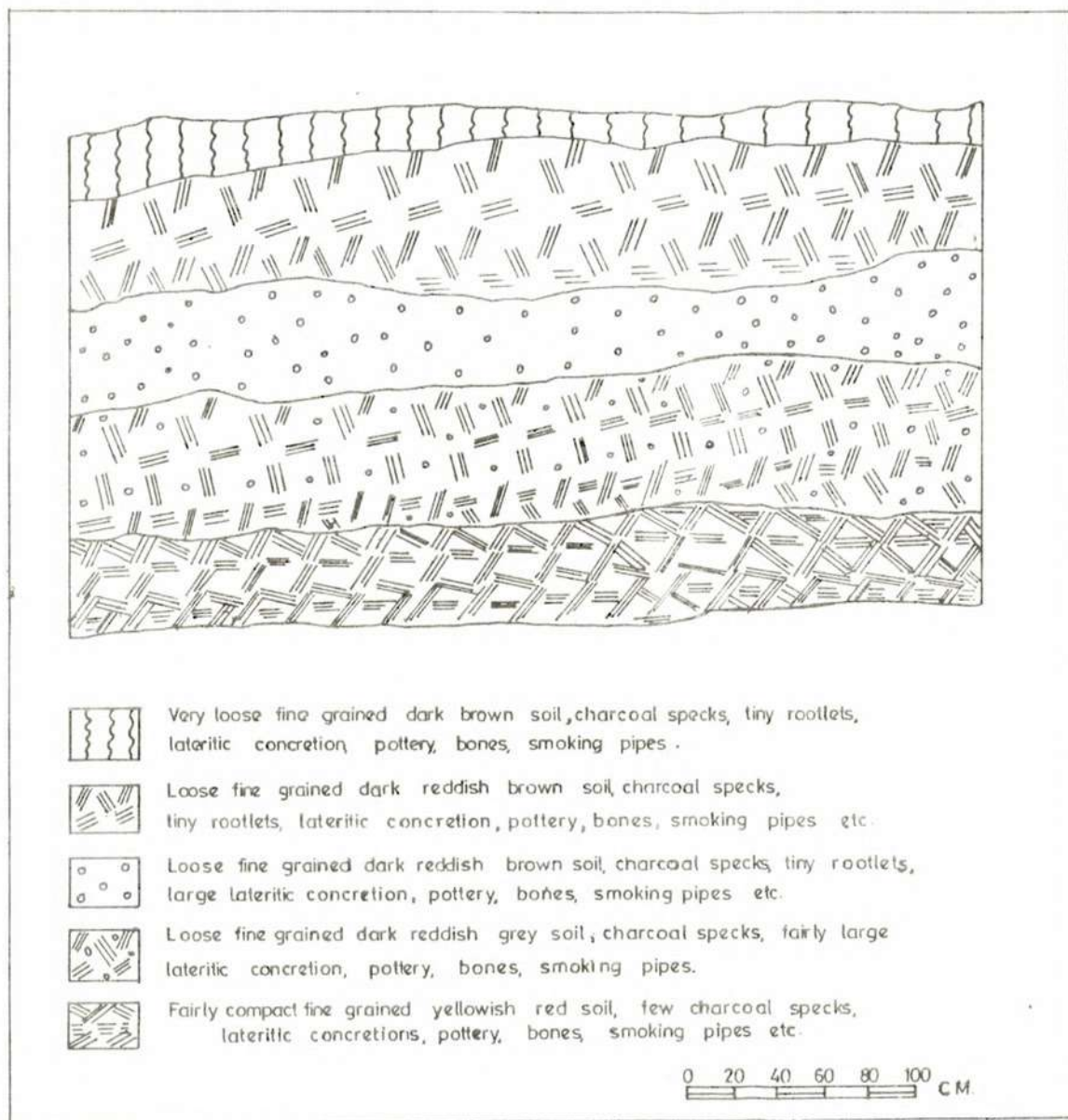


FIG. 14: Section drawing of Oketekakini (Idah) mound; southern wall.

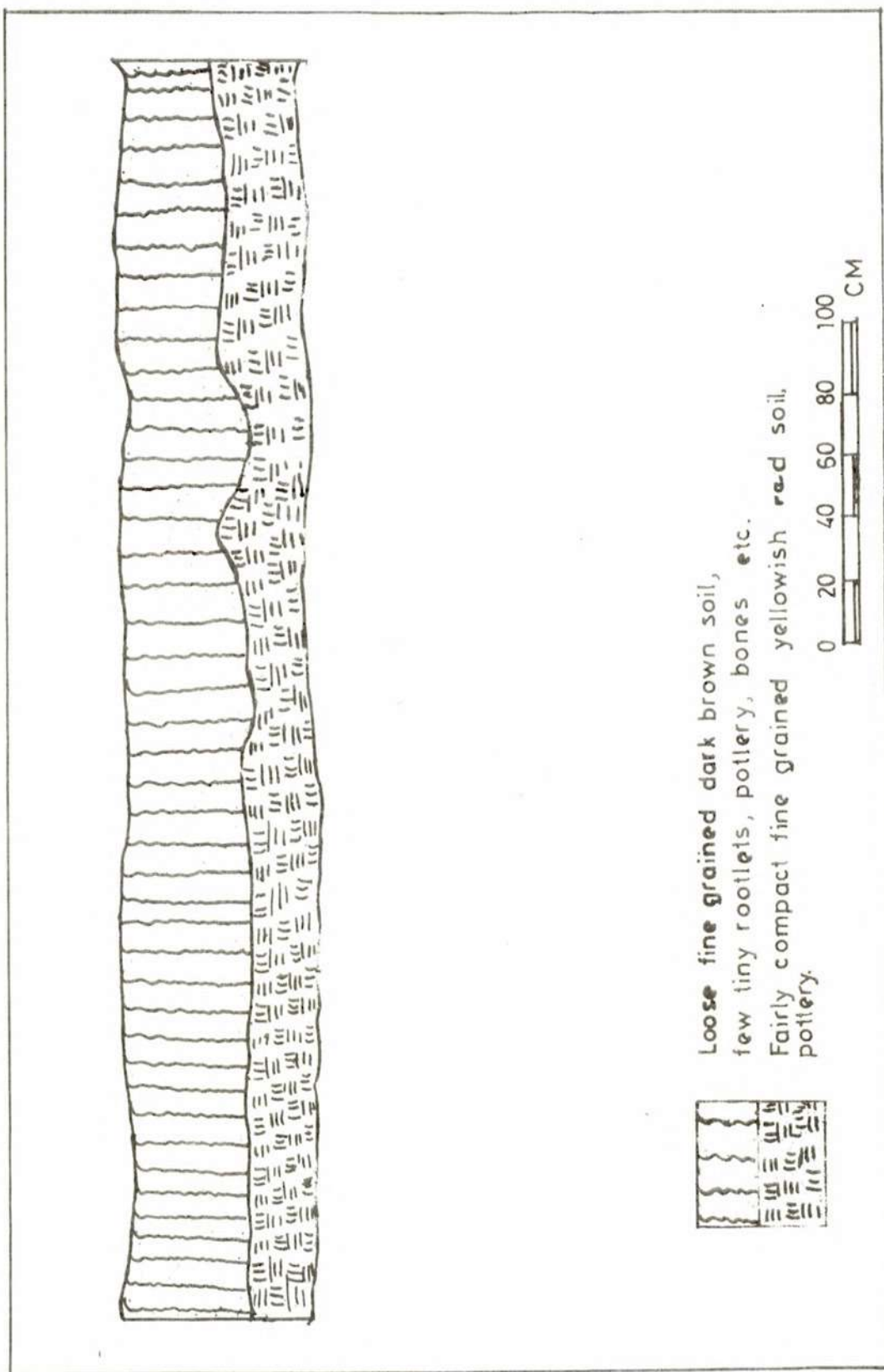


FIG. 15: Section drawing of Attida (Ogurugu) mound; northern wall.

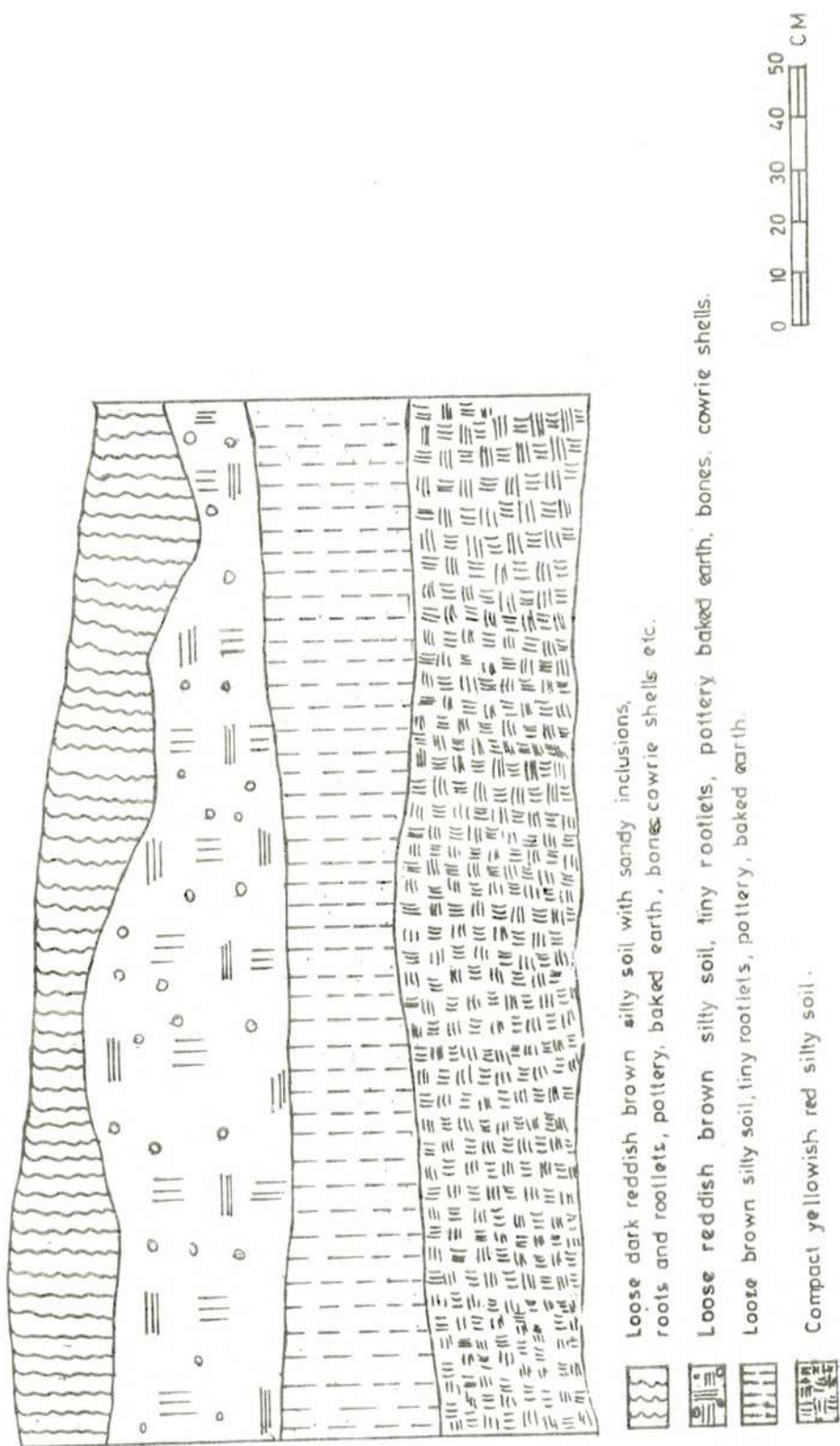


FIG. 16: Section drawing of Obatamu (Oguru) mound - test pit I (eastern wall).

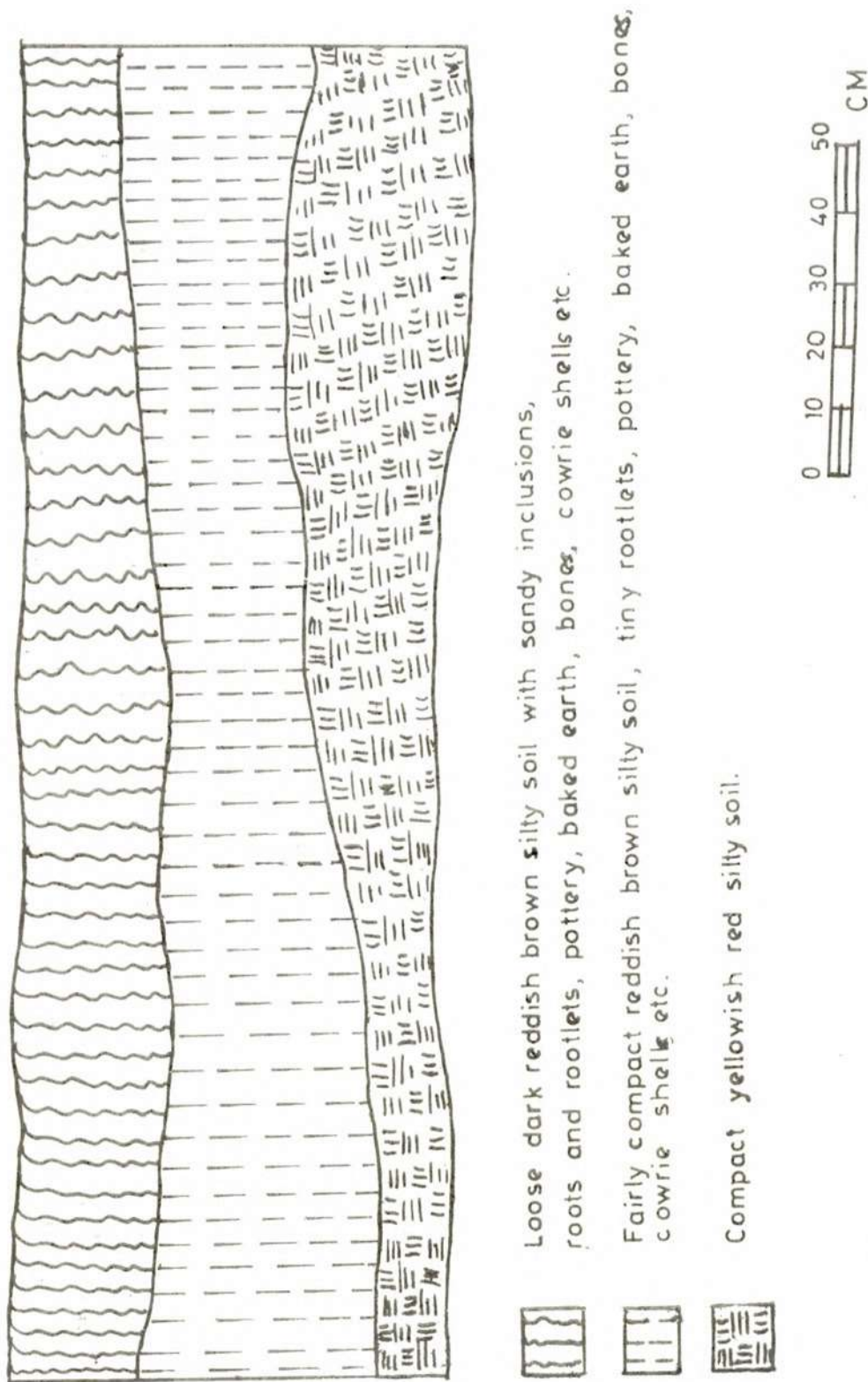


FIG. 17: Section drawing of Obatumu (Ogurugu) mound - test area II (eastern wall).

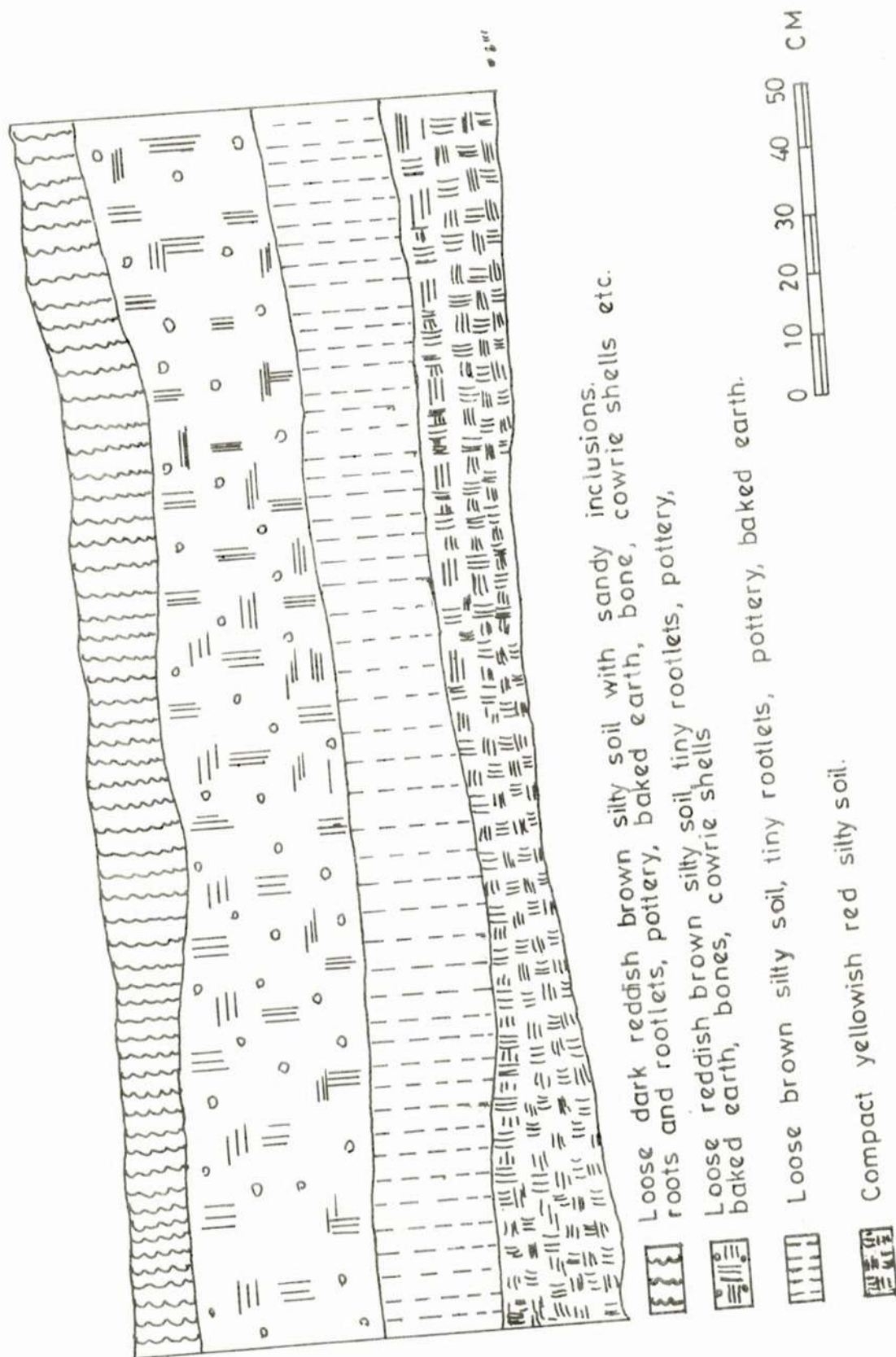


FIG. 18: Section drawing of Obatamu (Ogurugu) mound - test area III (western wall).

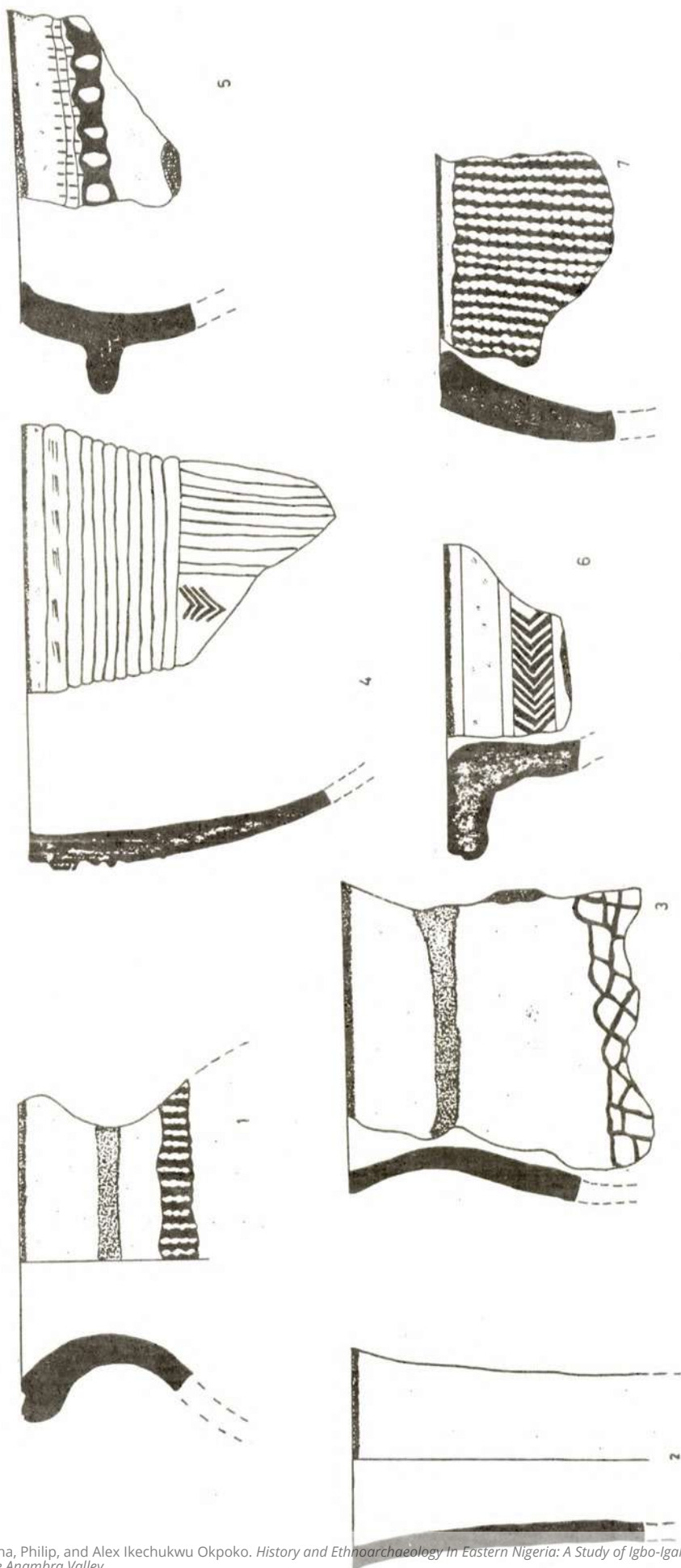


FIG. 19: Umuekete (Aguleri) site; vessel types.

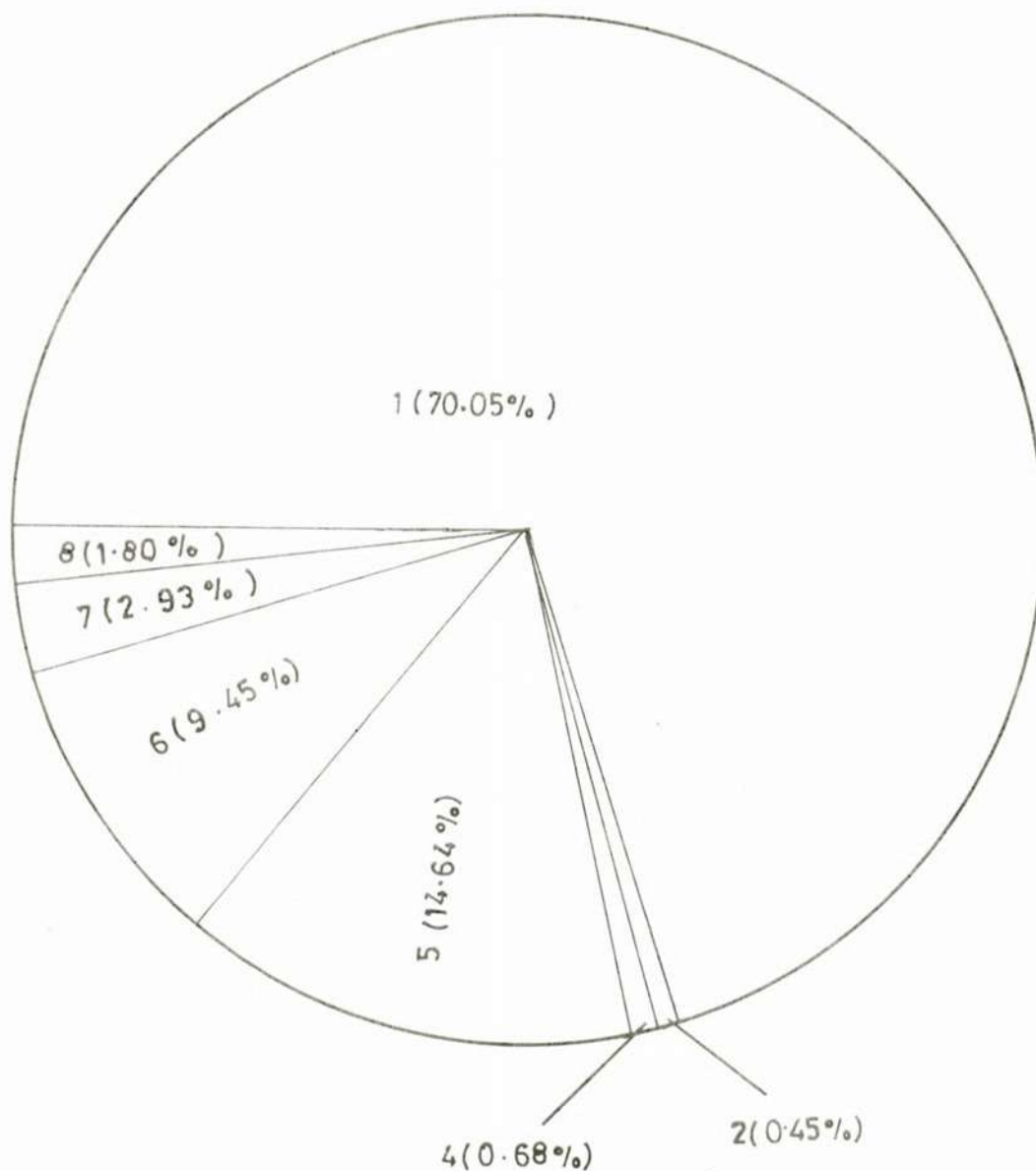


FIG. 20: Piechart of percentage occurrence of vessel types - Umuekete (Aguleri) area.

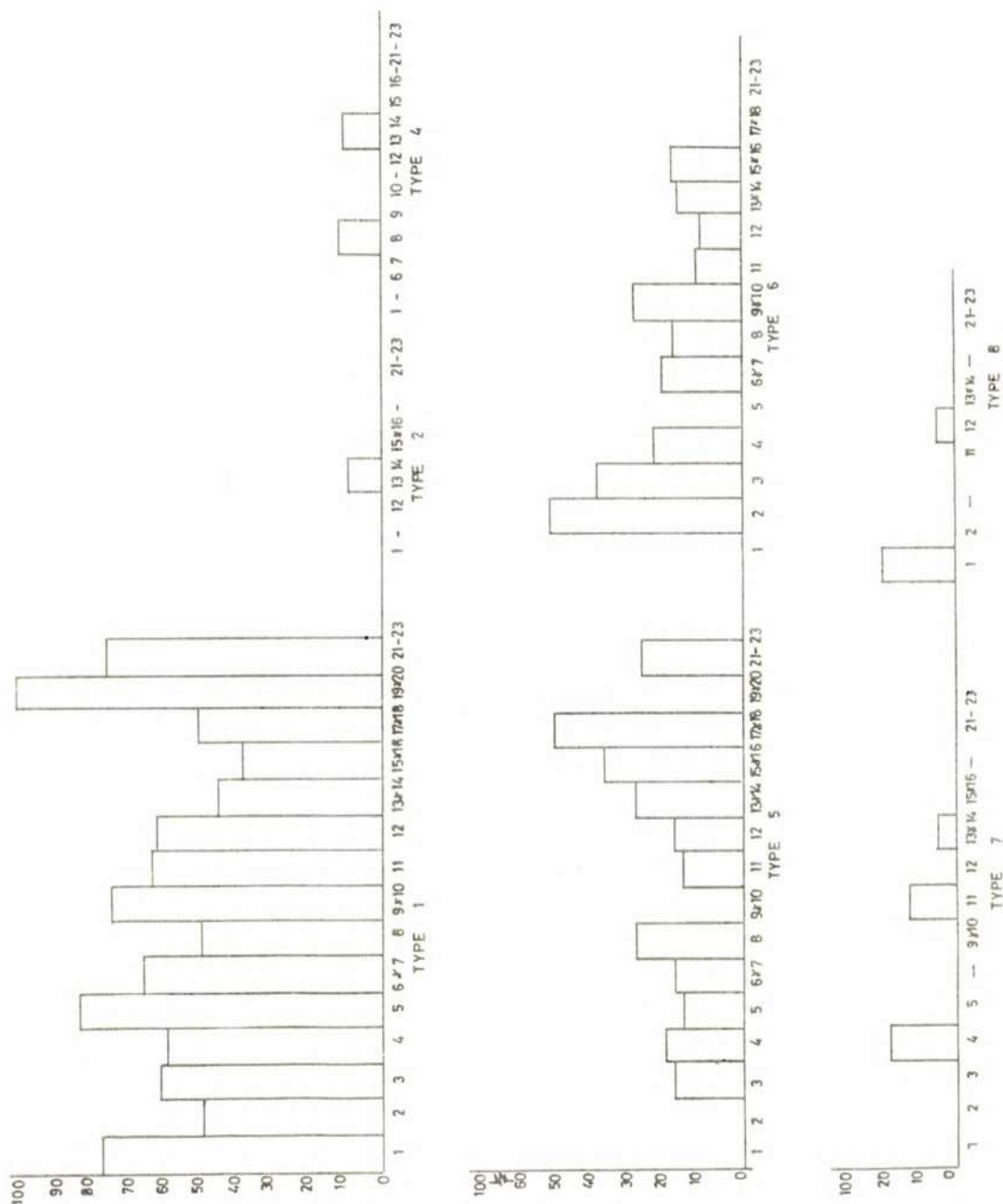


FIG. 21: Histogram of percentage distribution of vessel types according to spit levels/layers - Umuekete (Aguleri) - trench A1.

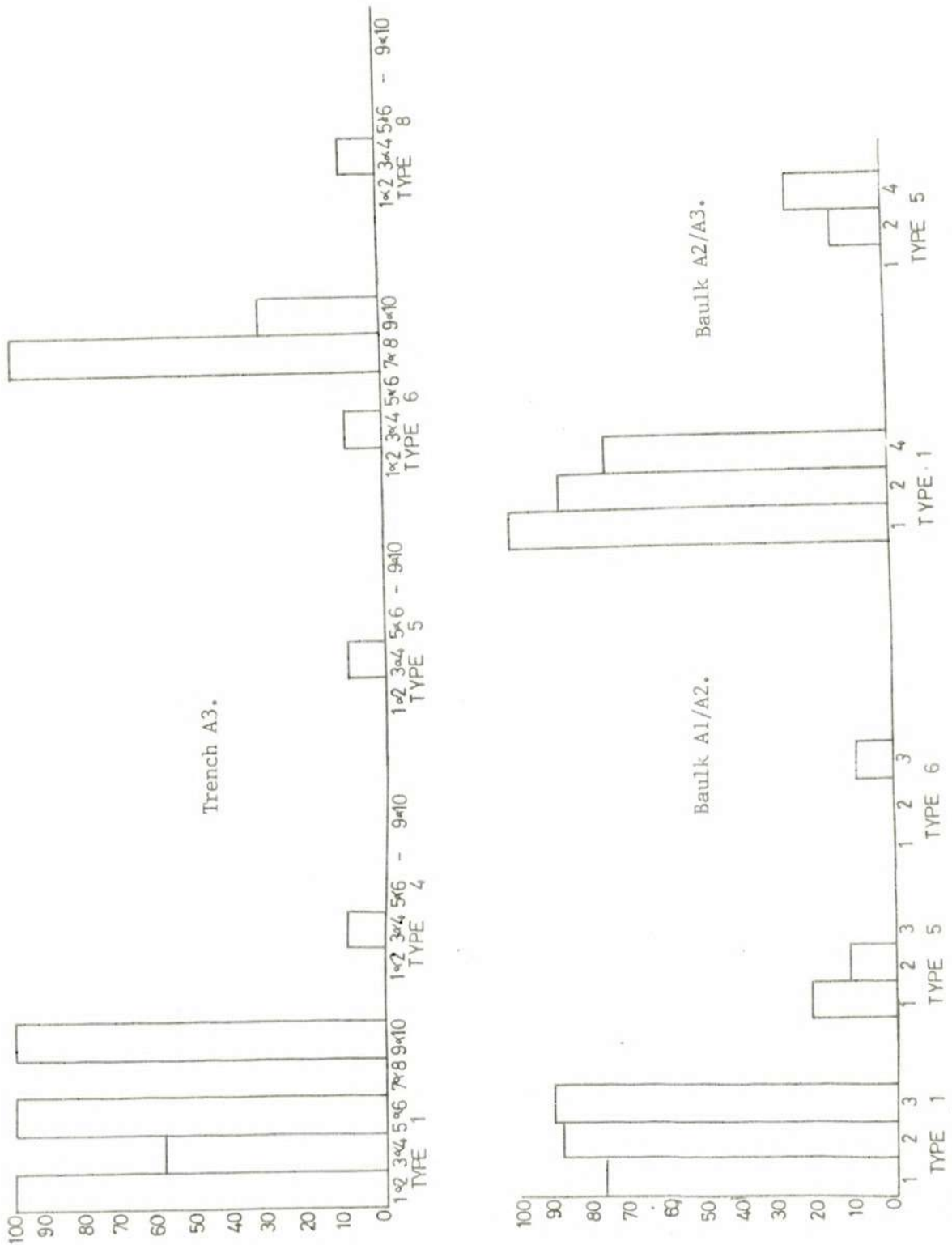


FIG. 21: Contd

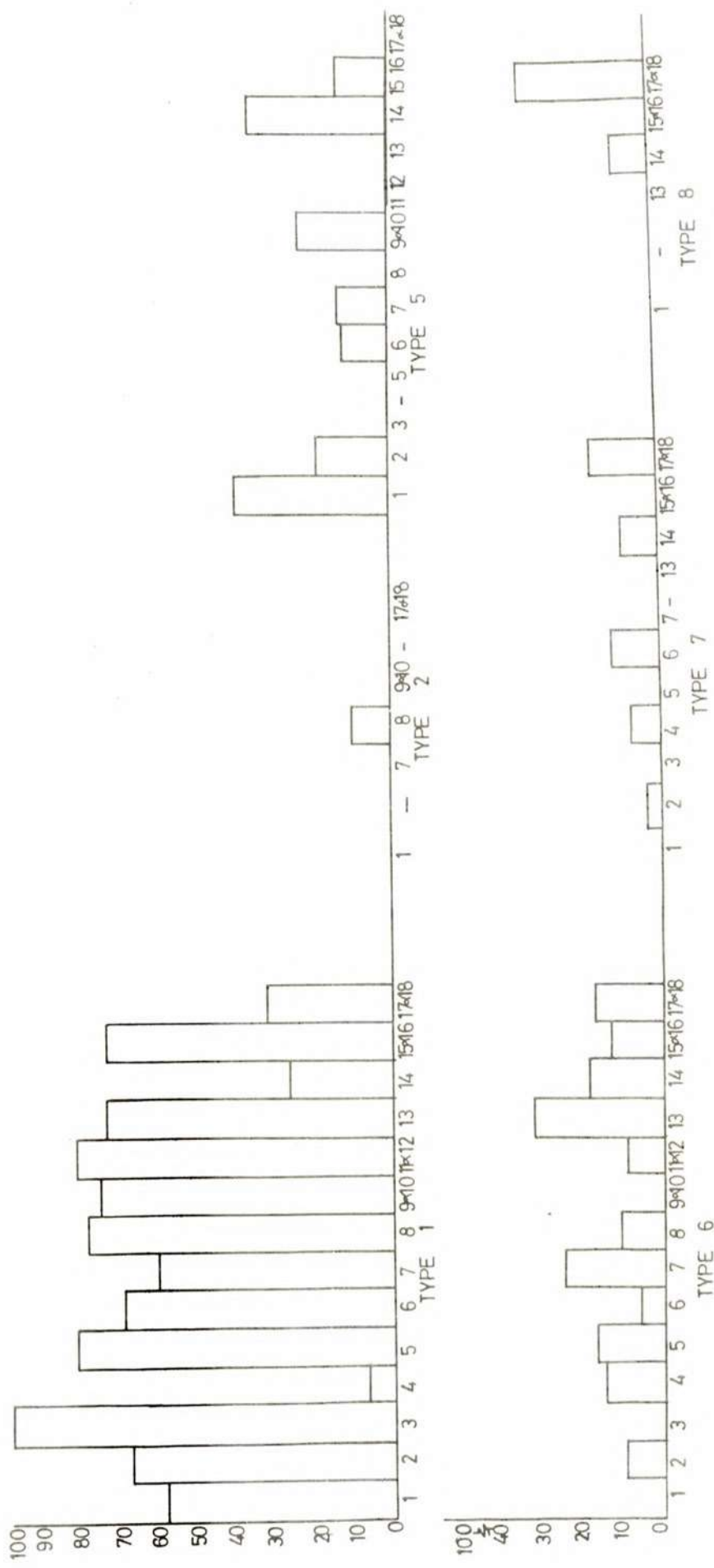


FIG. 21: Histogram of percentage distribution of vessel types according to spit levels/years - Umuekete (Aguleri) - Trench A2, Trench A3, Baulk A1/A2, Baulk A2/A3.

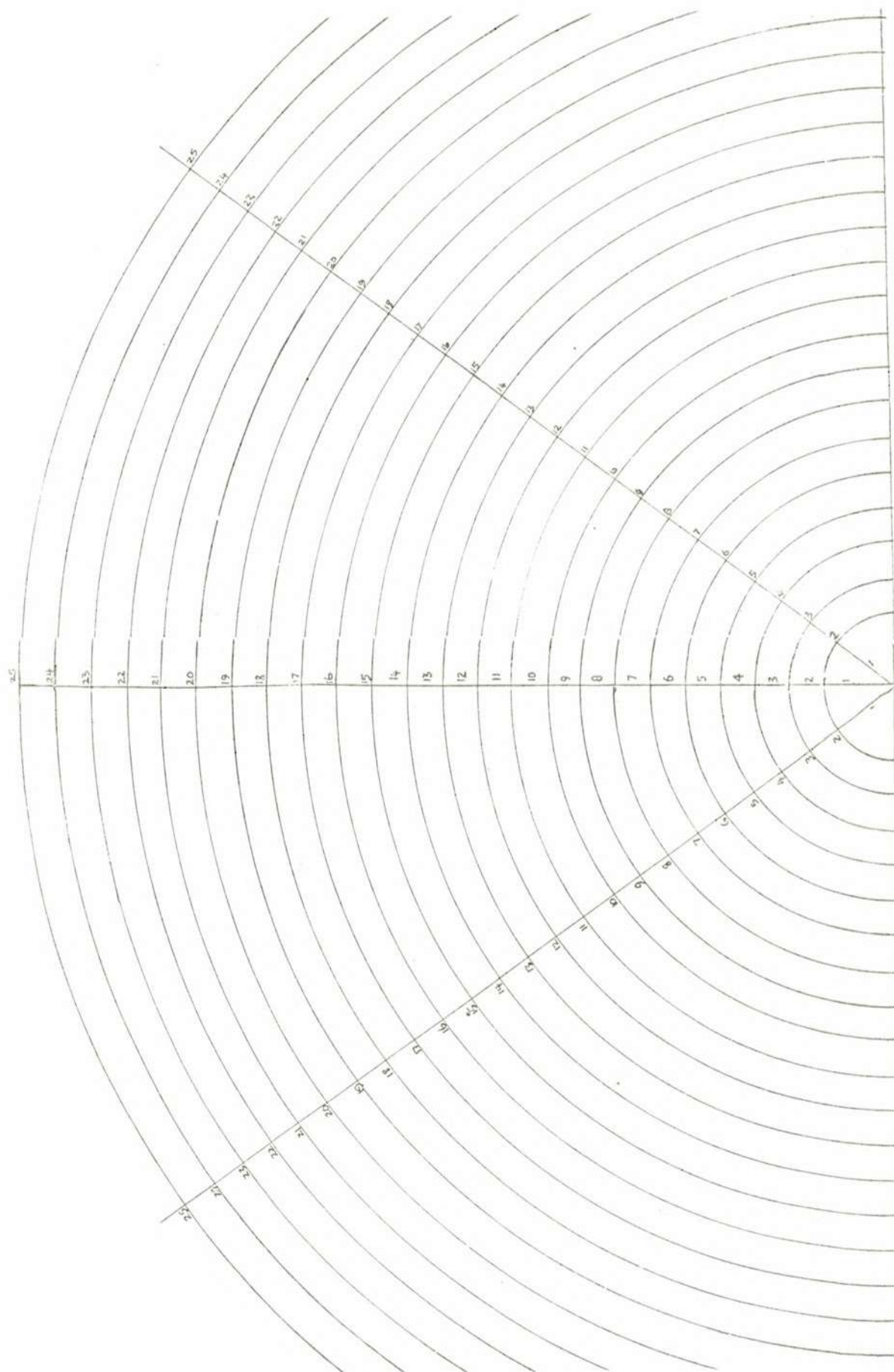


FIG. 22: Pottery Rim Diameter Chart

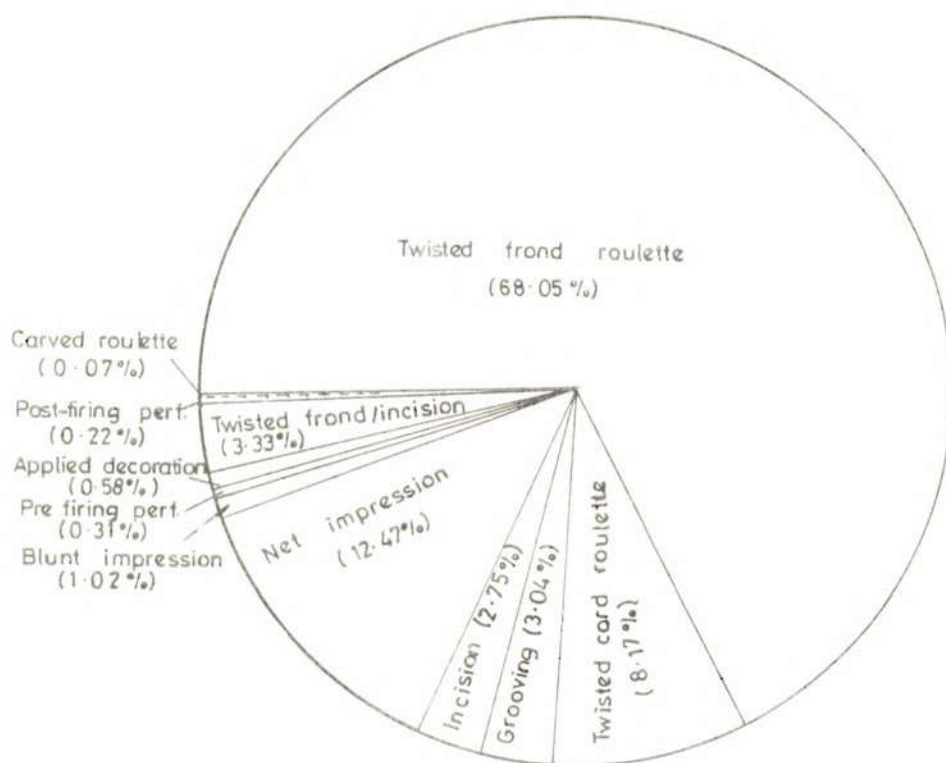


FIG. 23: Piechart of percentage occurrence of the decorative categories at Umuekete (Aguleri).

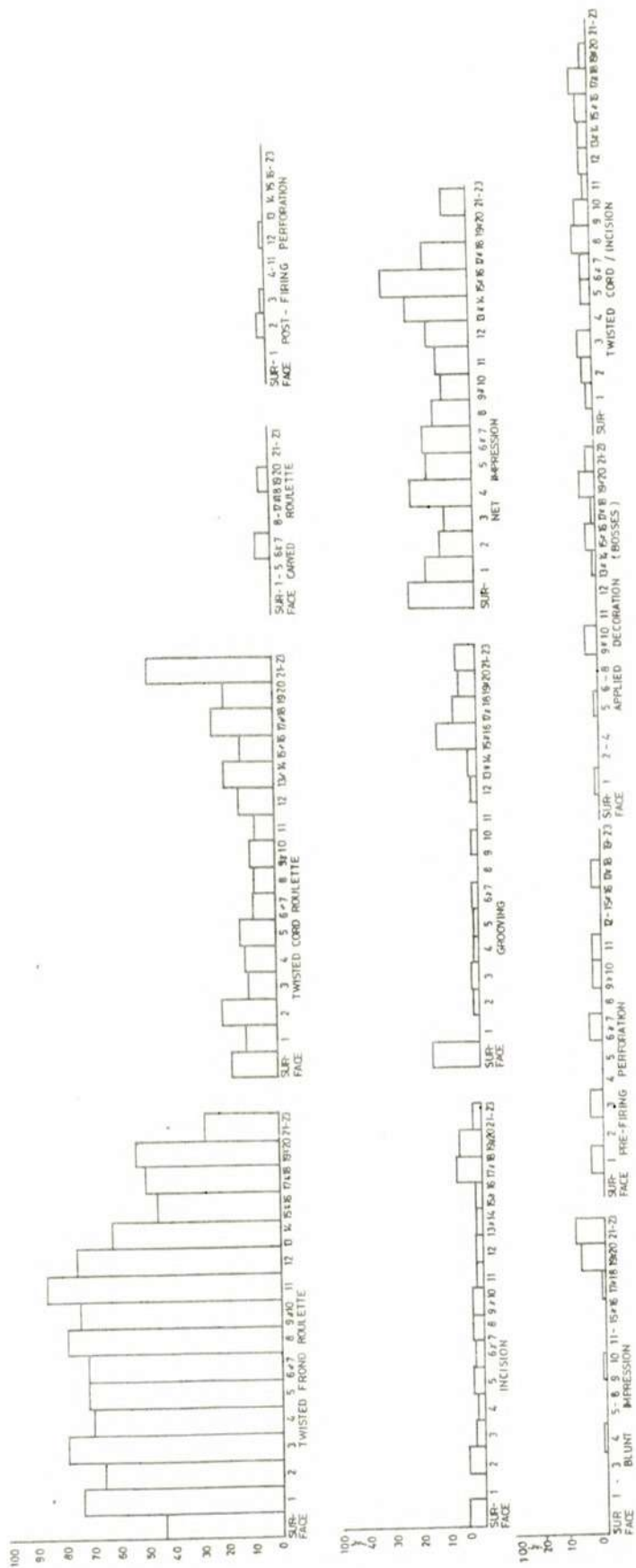


FIG. 24: Histogram of percentage occurrence of the decorative categories according to spit levels/layers - Umekete (Aguleri).

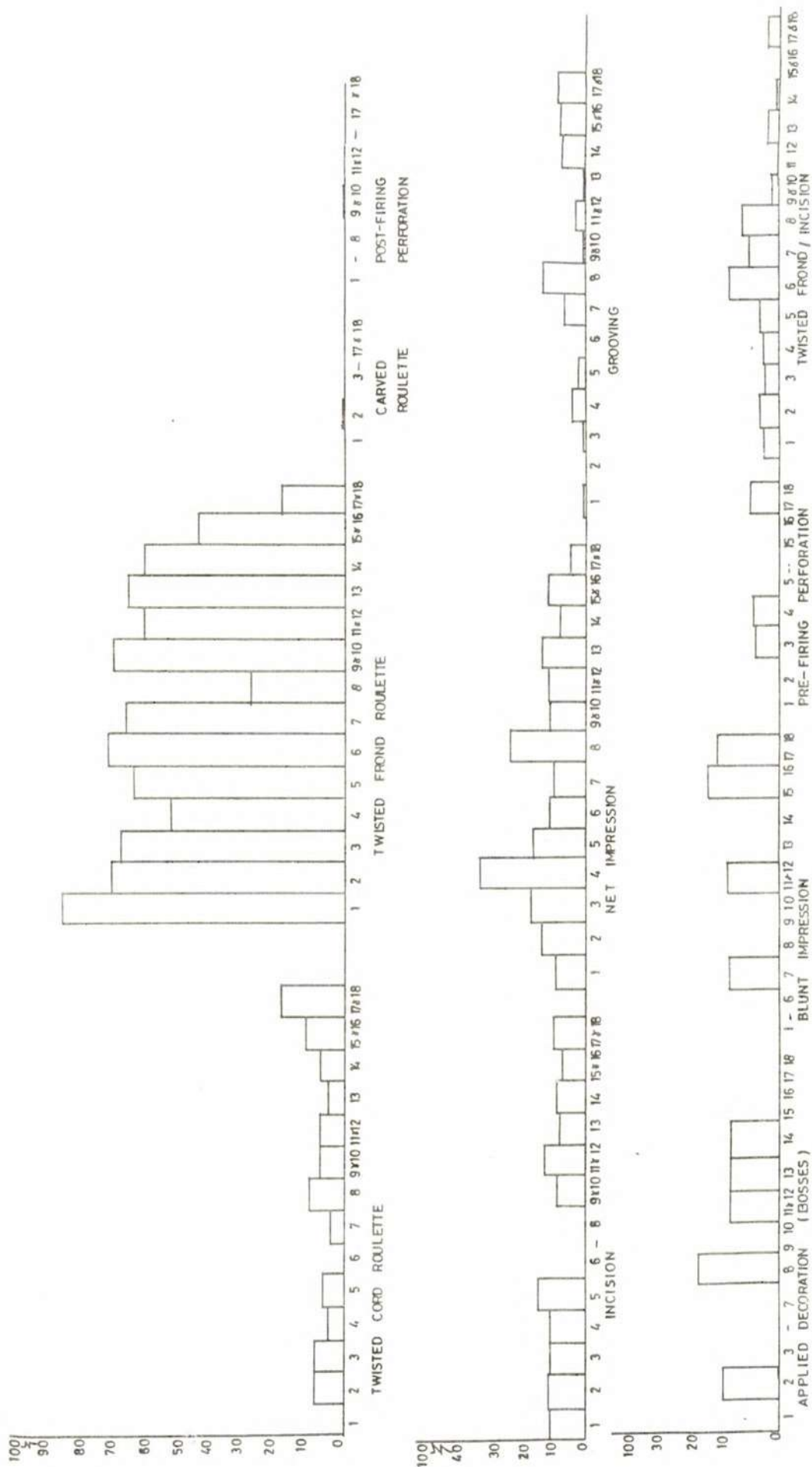


FIG. 24: Contd - trench A2.

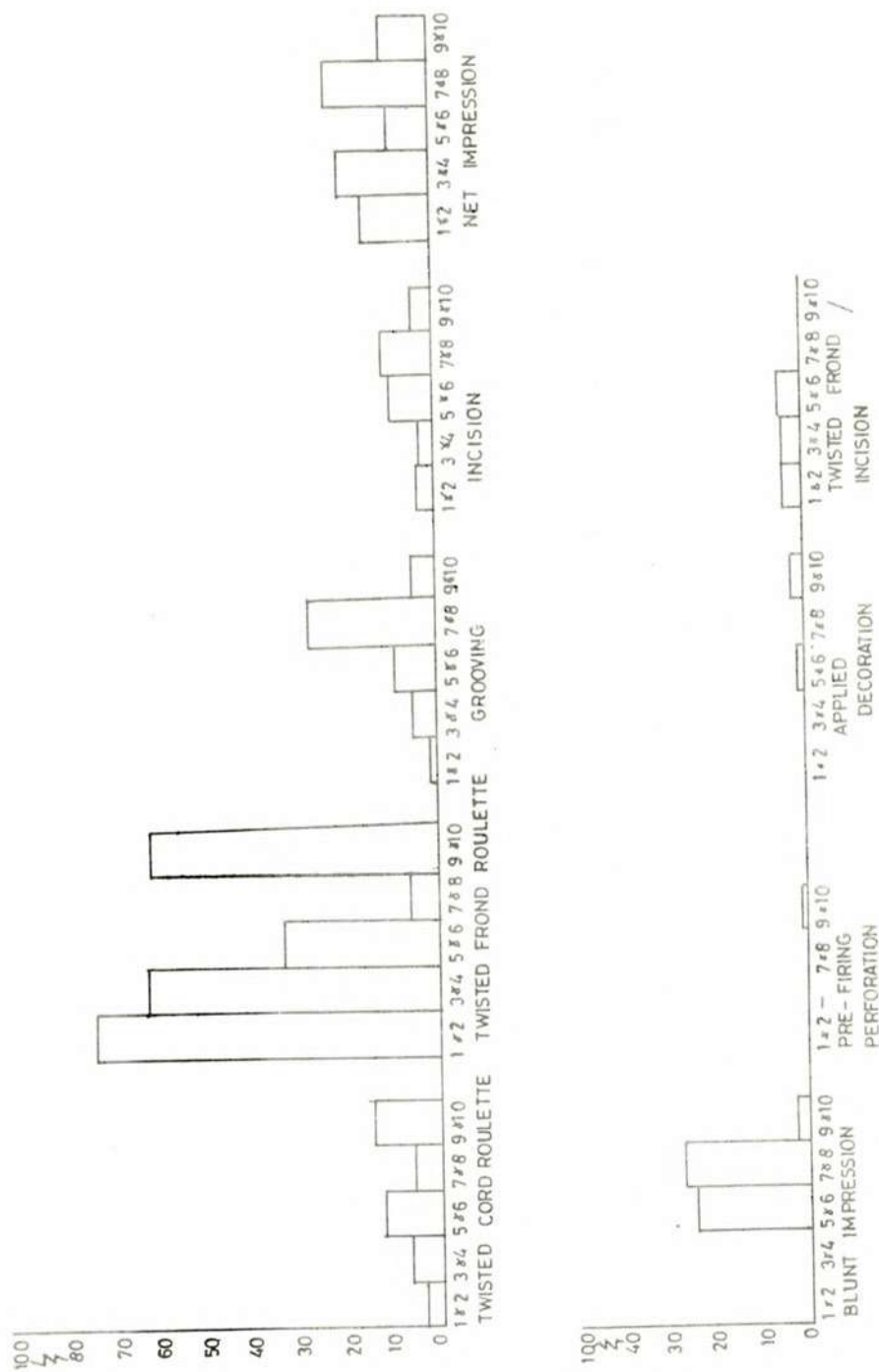


FIG. 24: Contd - trench A3.

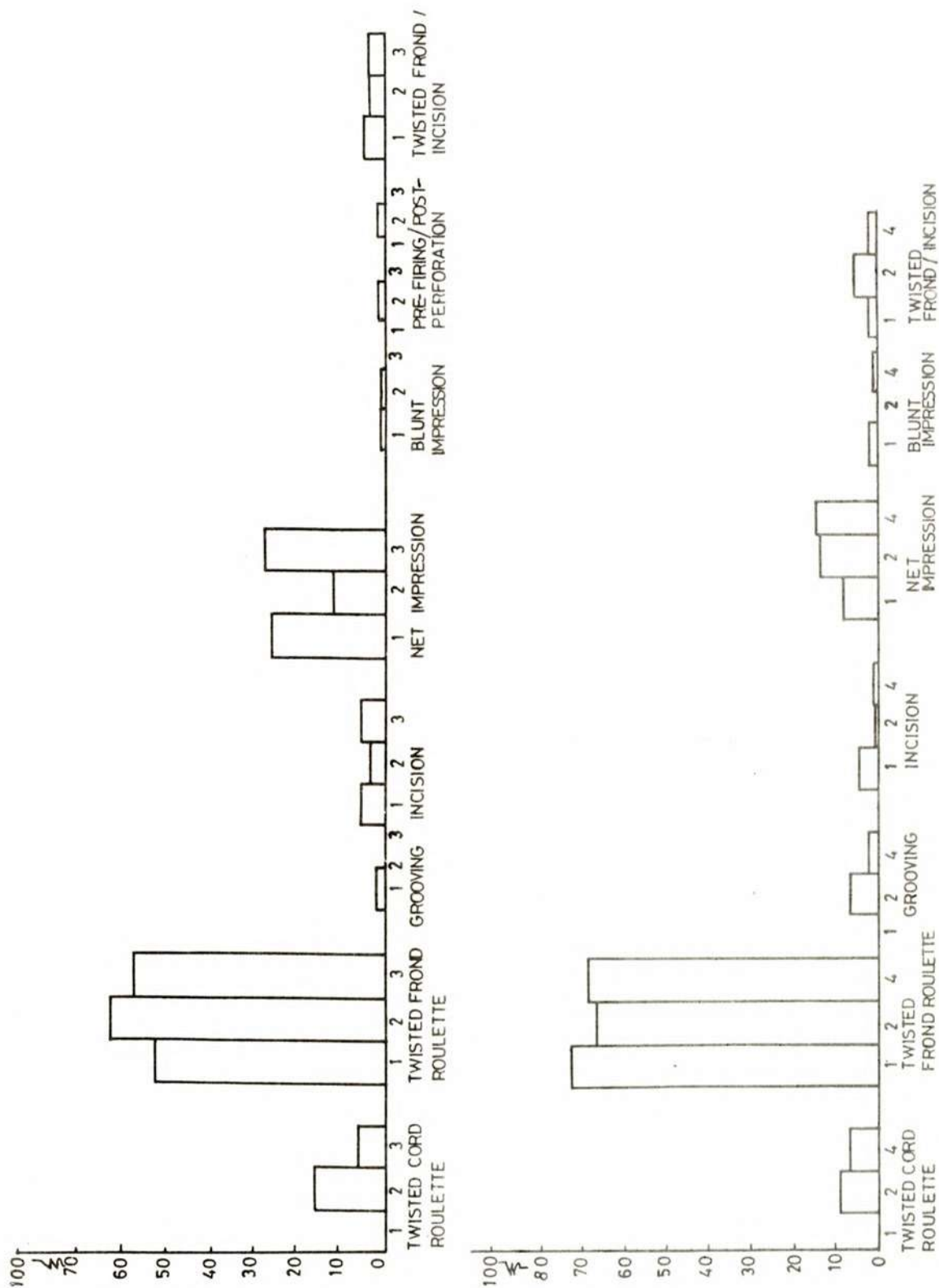


FIG. 24: Contd - Baulks A1/A2 and A2/A3.

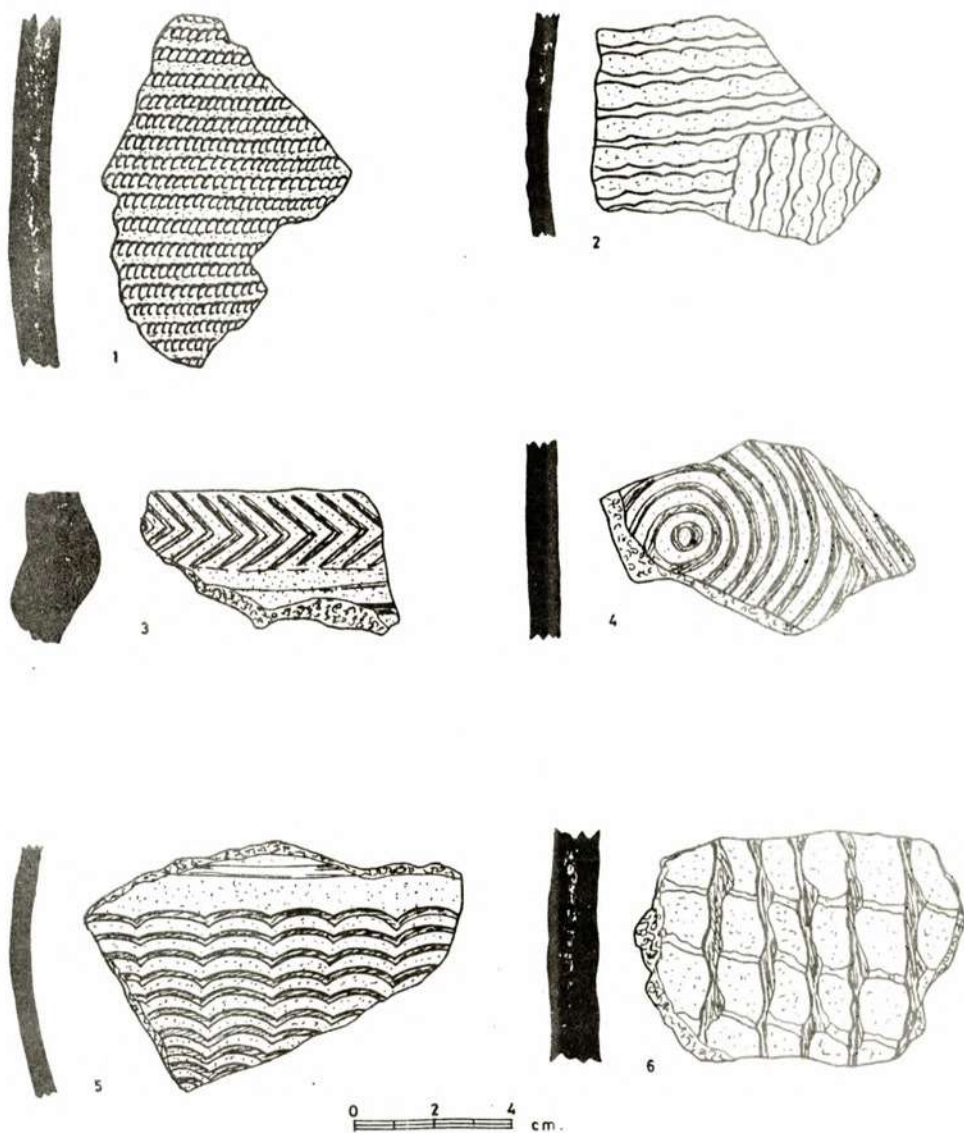


FIG. 25: Umuekete (Aguleri) - decorated sherds.

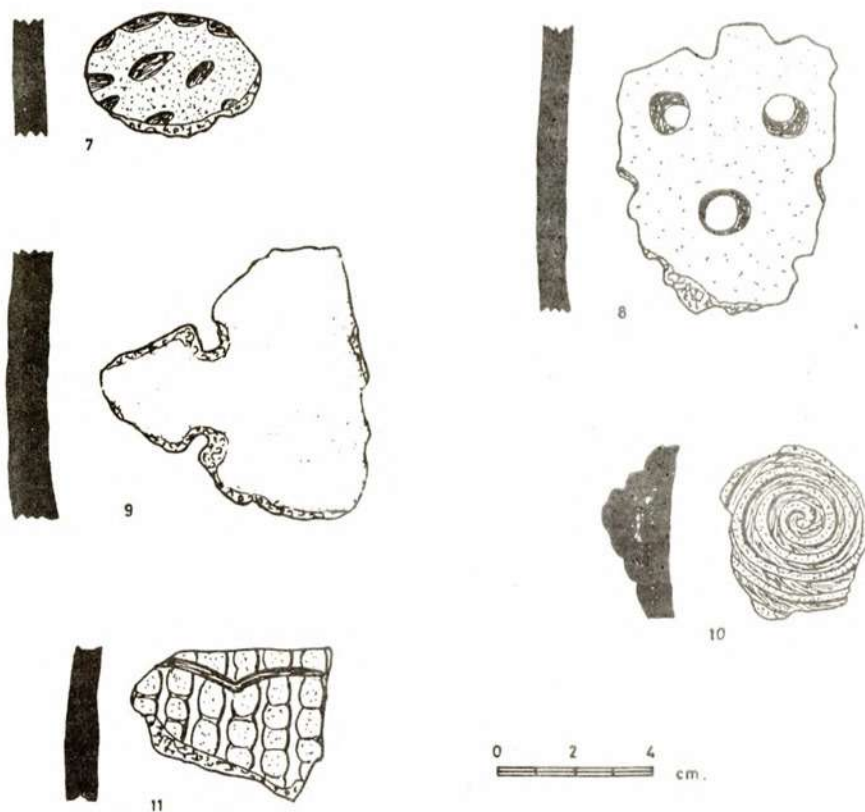


FIG. 25: Contd.

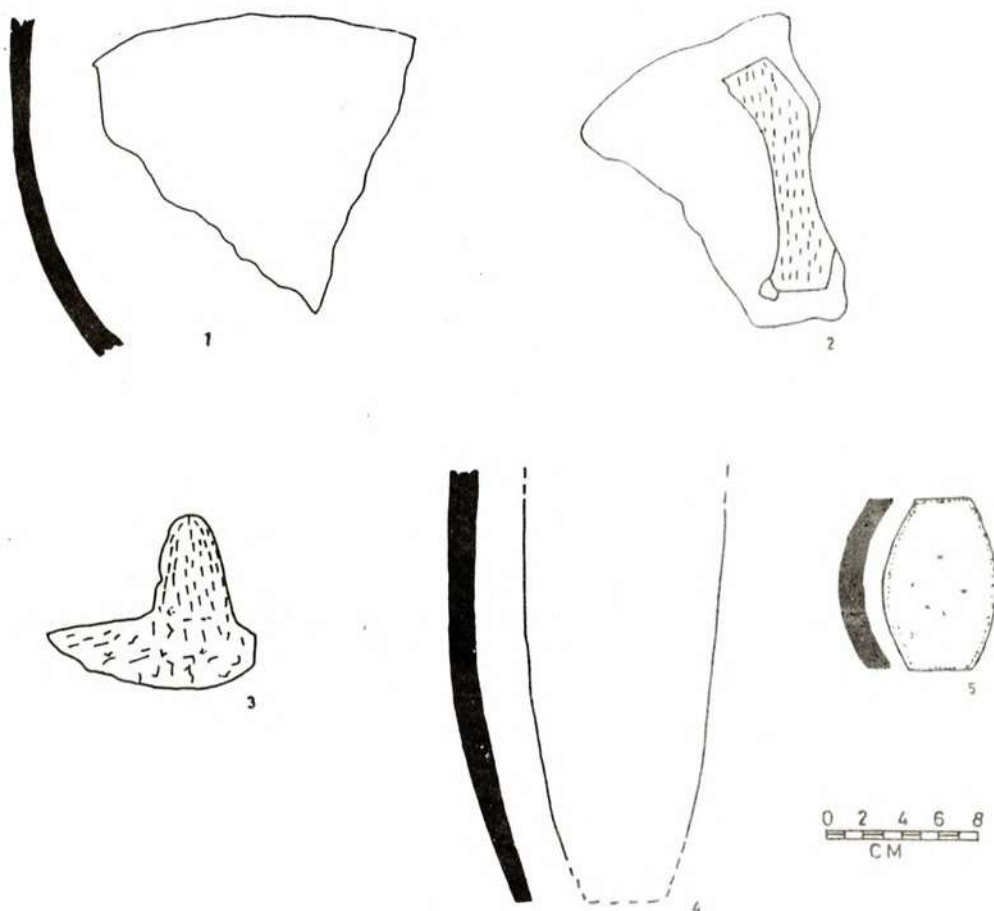


FIG. 26: Other sherds (besides rim and body sherds), a spindle whorl and reconstructed clay tuyère - Umuekete (Aguleri).

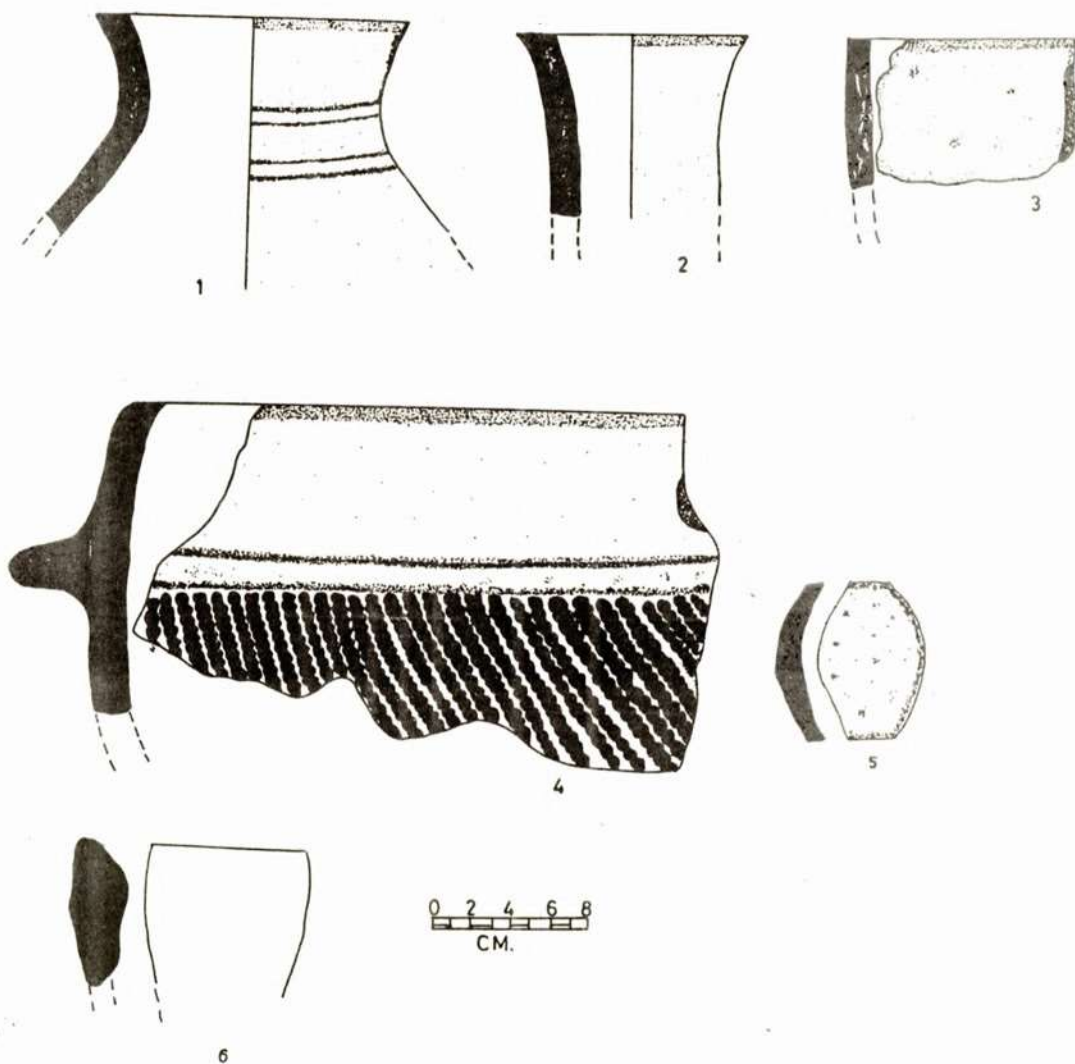


FIG. 27: Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) site - vessel types, a spindle whorl and reconstructed clay tuyères.

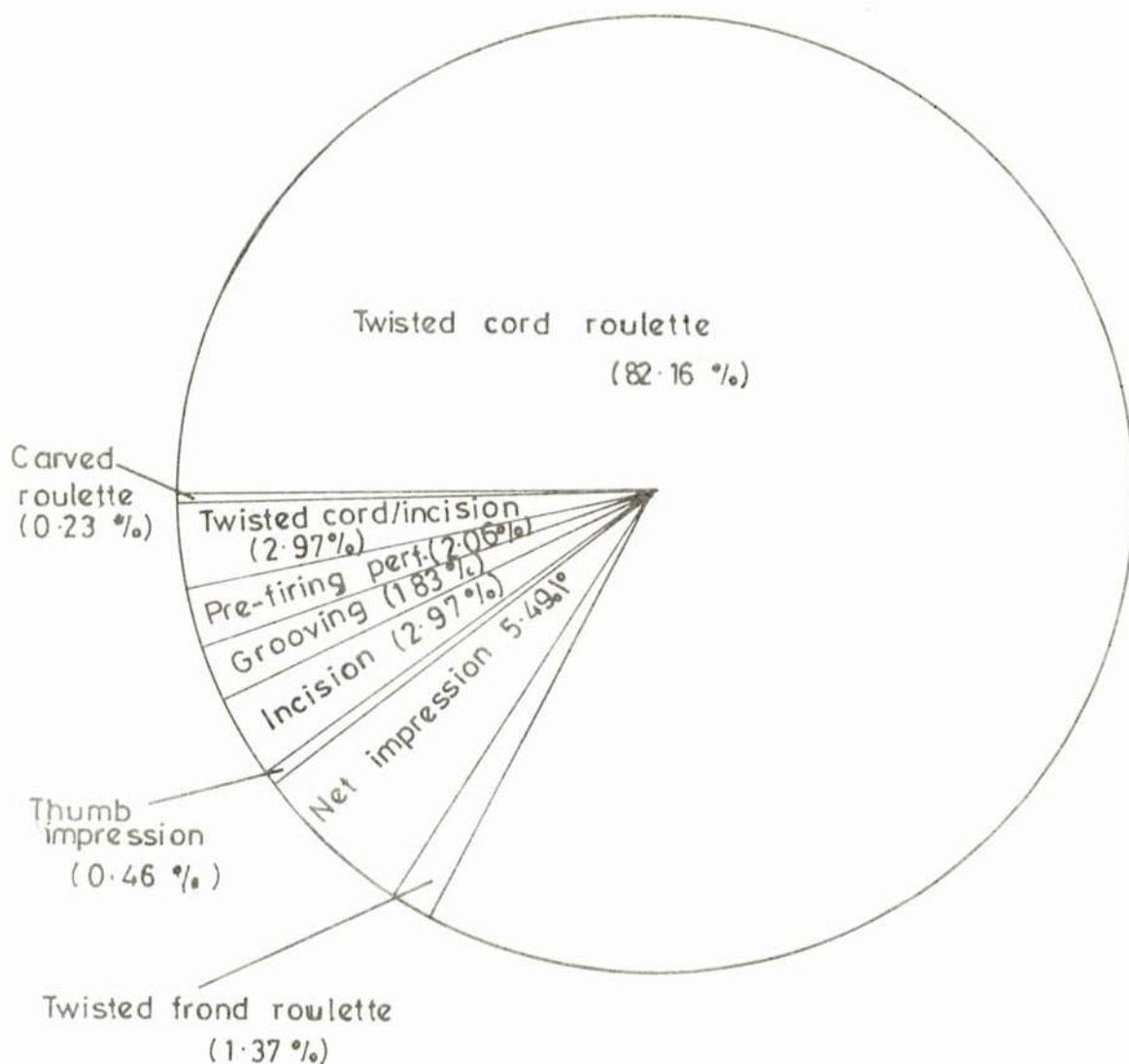
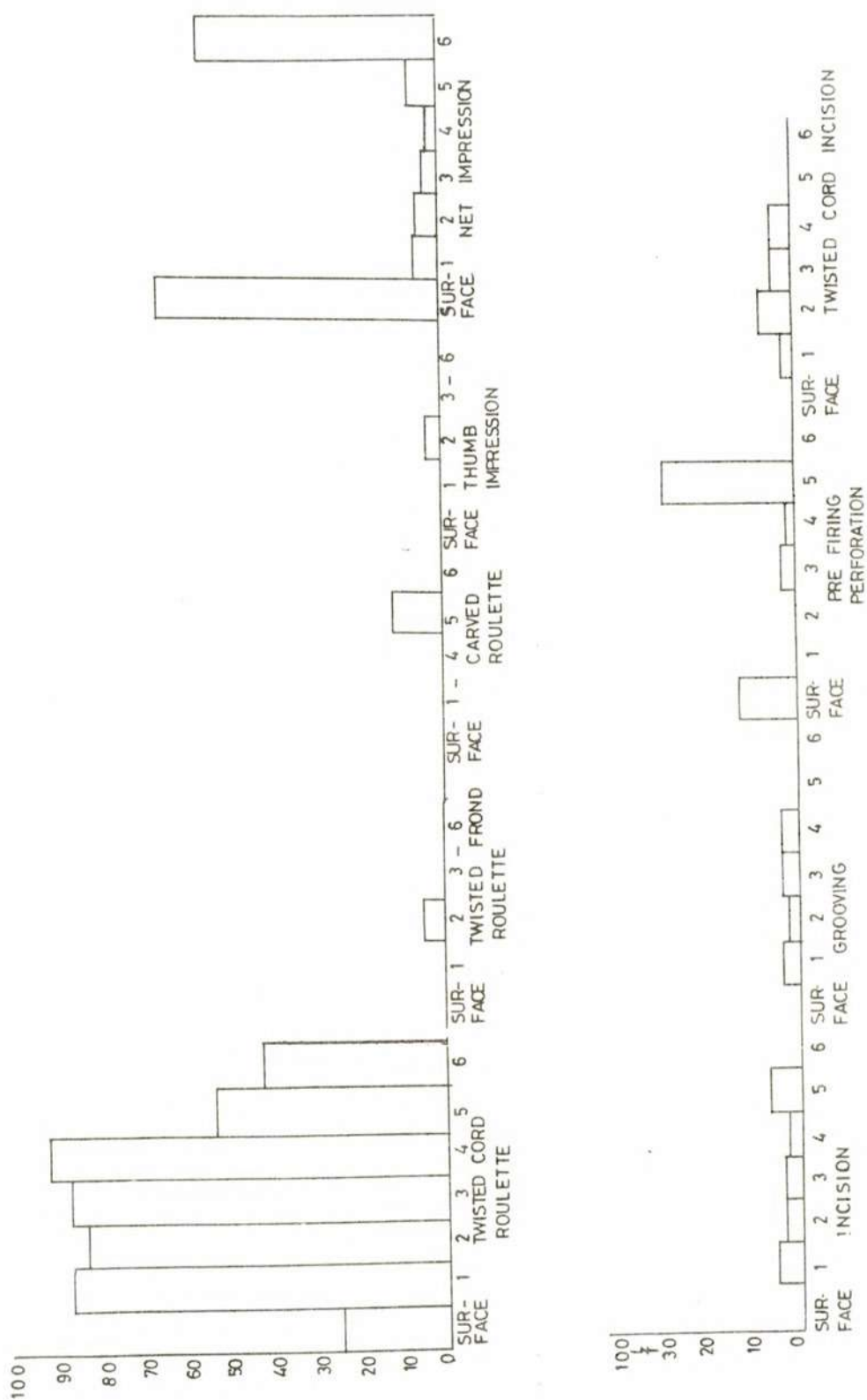


FIG. 28: Piechart of percentage occurrence of decorative categories - Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah).



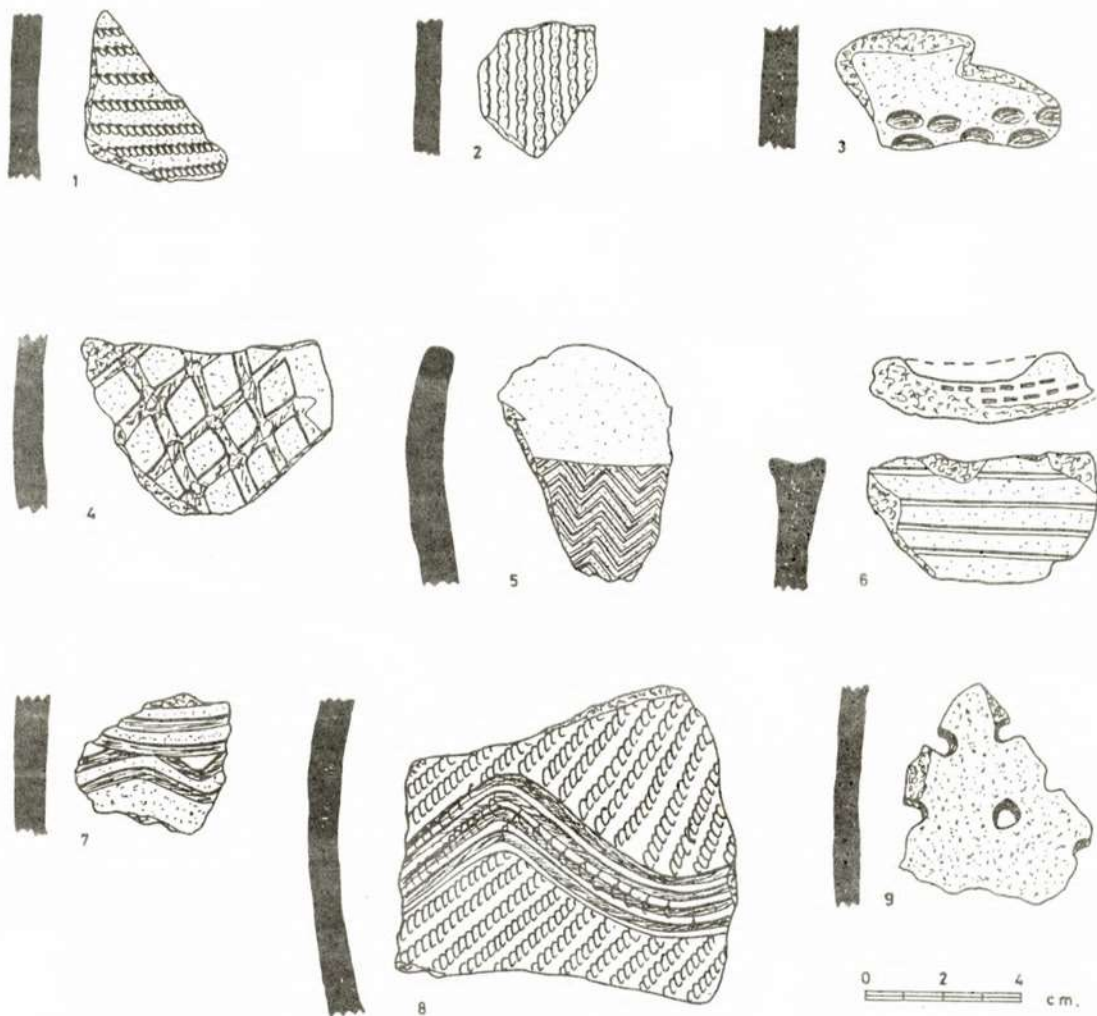


FIG. 30: Ojuwo Ata Ogu (Idah) site - decorated sherds.

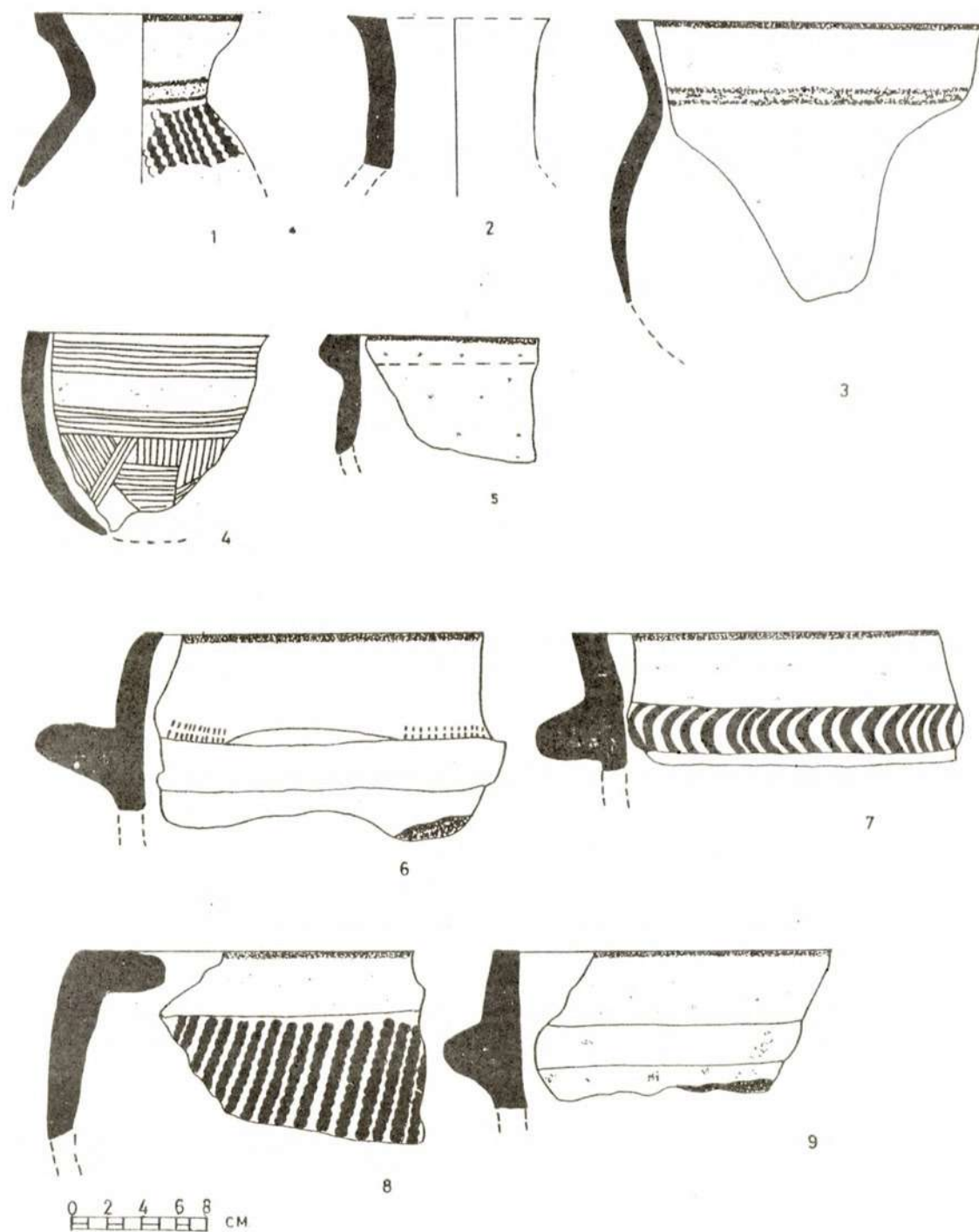


FIG. 31: Oketekakini (Idah) site; vessel types.

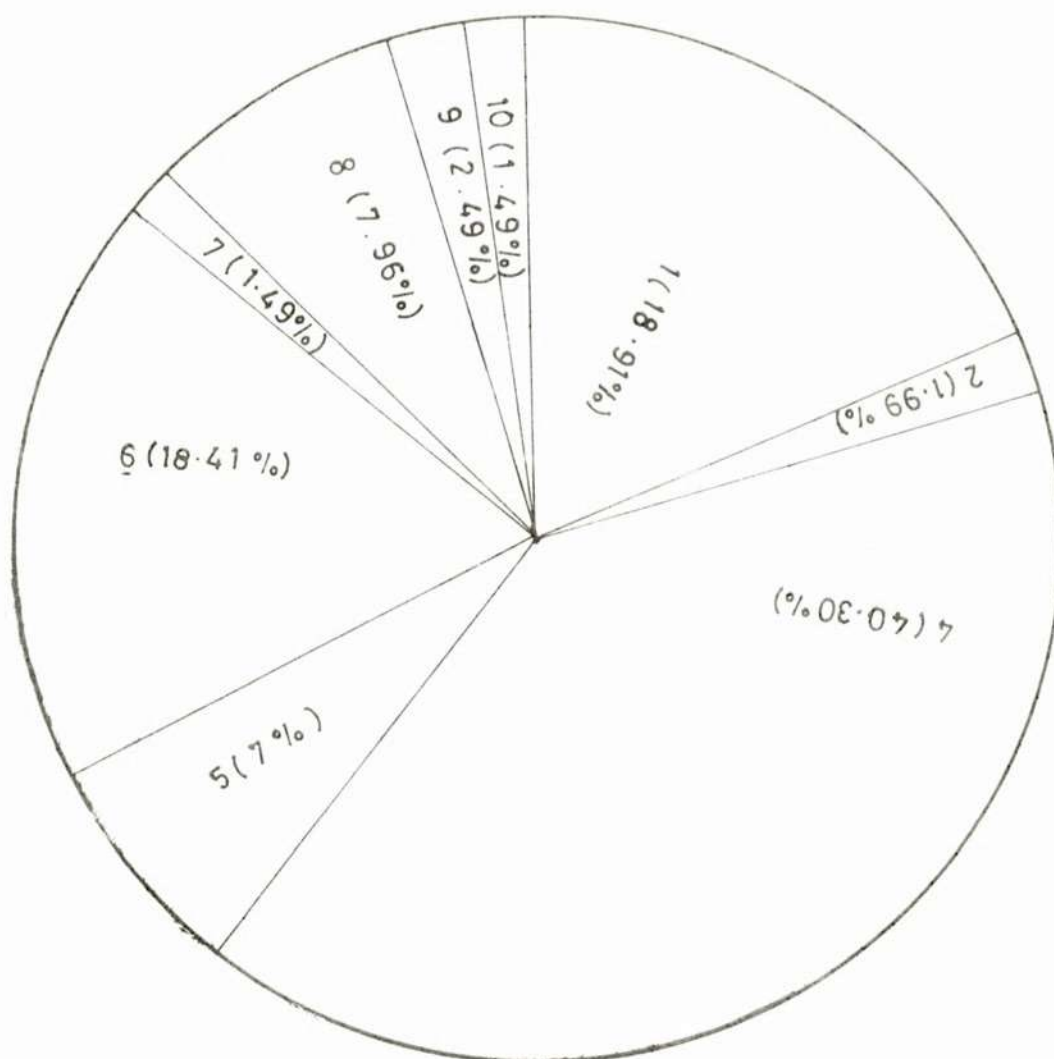
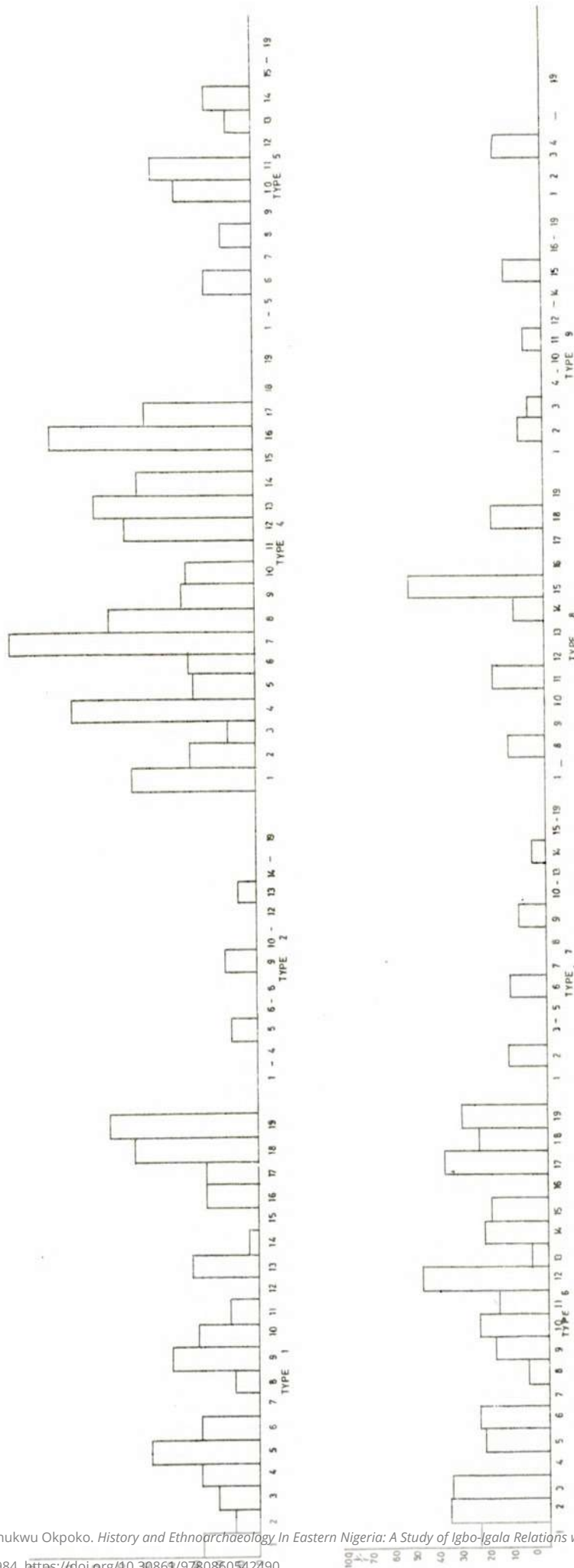


FIG. 32: Piechart of percentage occurrence of vessel types - Oketekakini: (Idah).



33. Obaturu (Ogurugu) site showing number and percentage distribution of vessel types according to spit levels (percentage based on total diagnostic rim sherds).

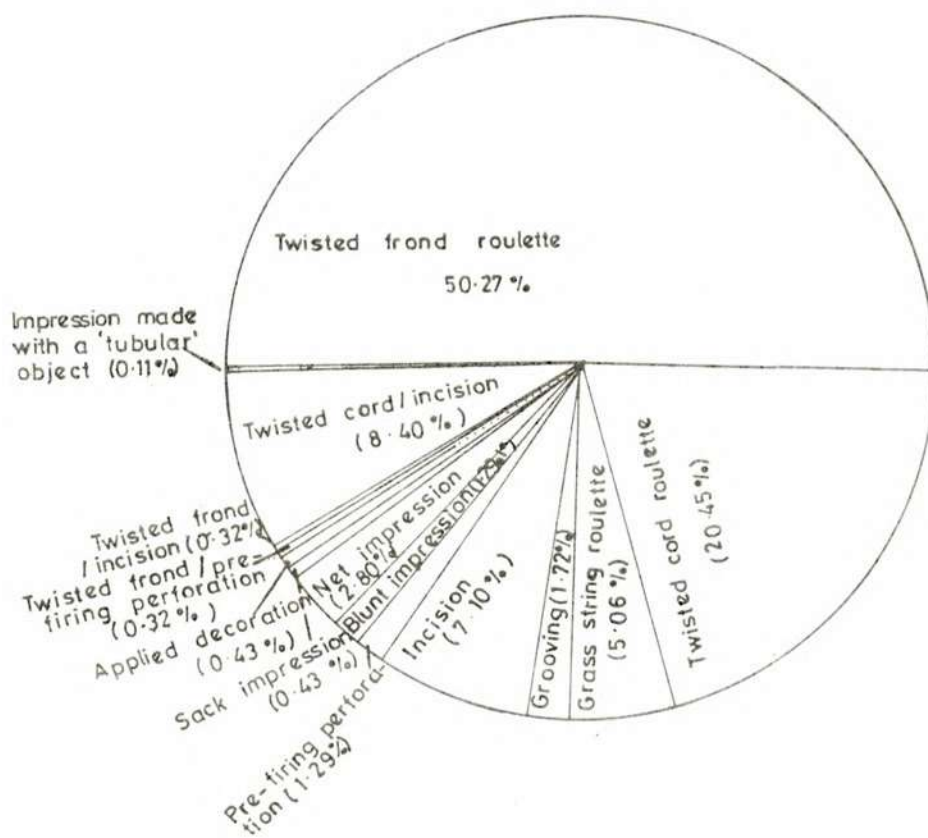


FIG. 34: Piechart of percentage occurrence of the decorative categories; Oketekakini (Idah).

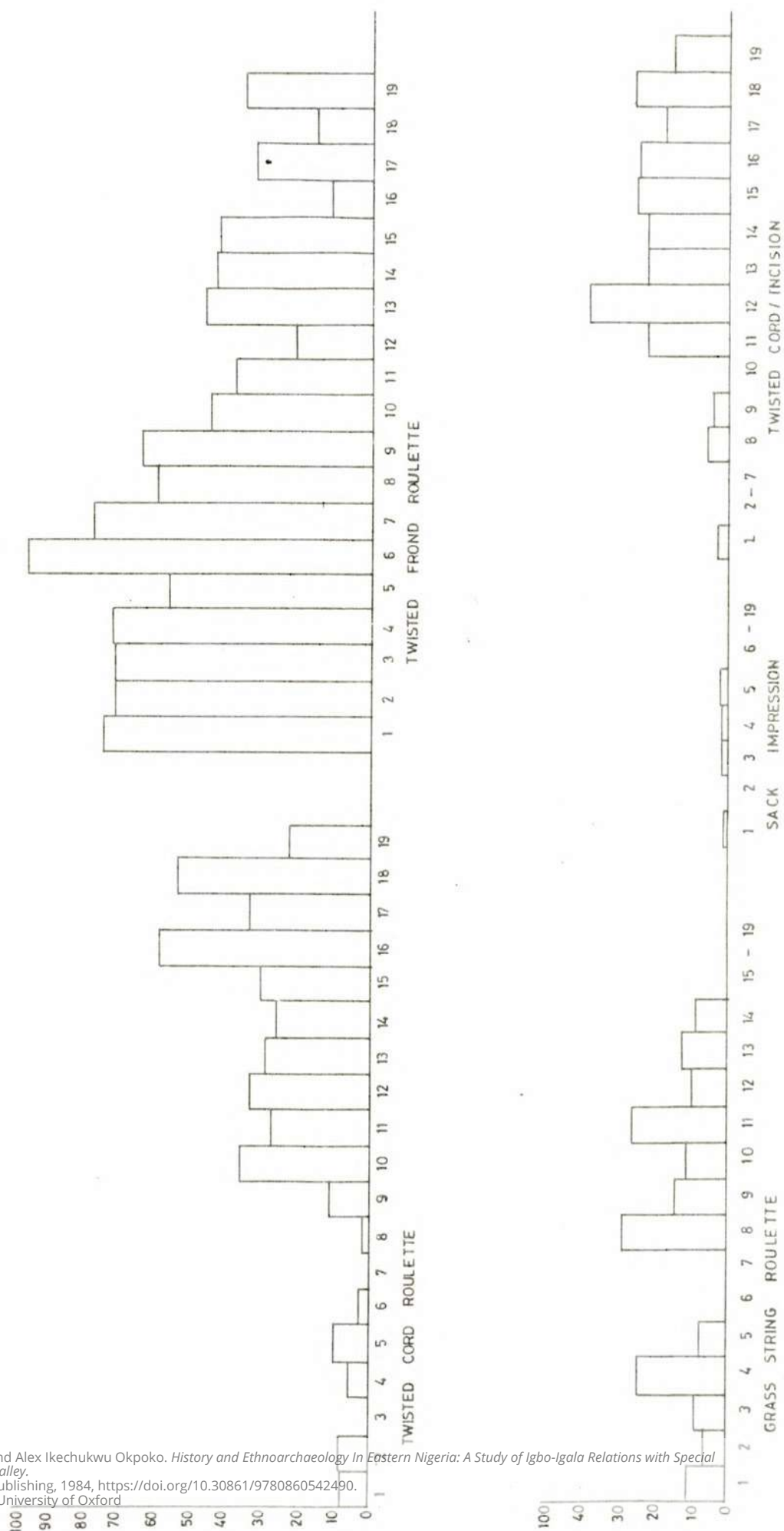


FIG. 35: Histogram of percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels - Oketekakini (Idah).

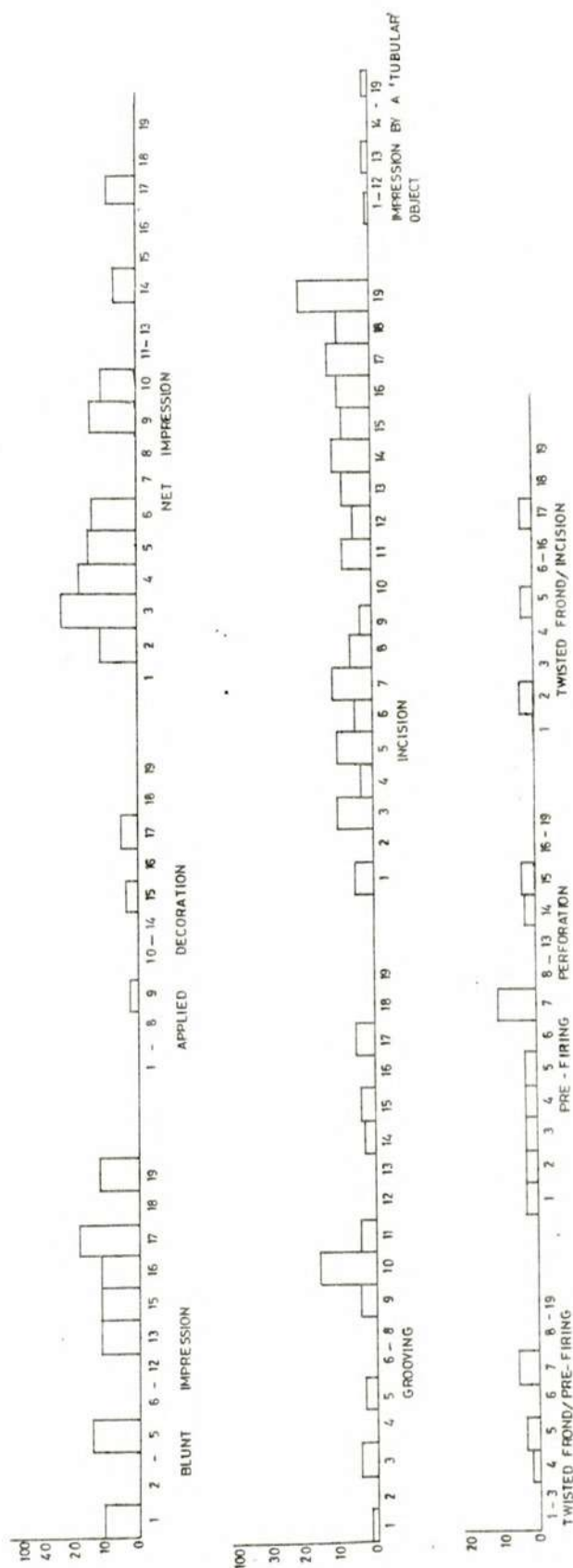


FIG. 35: Contd.

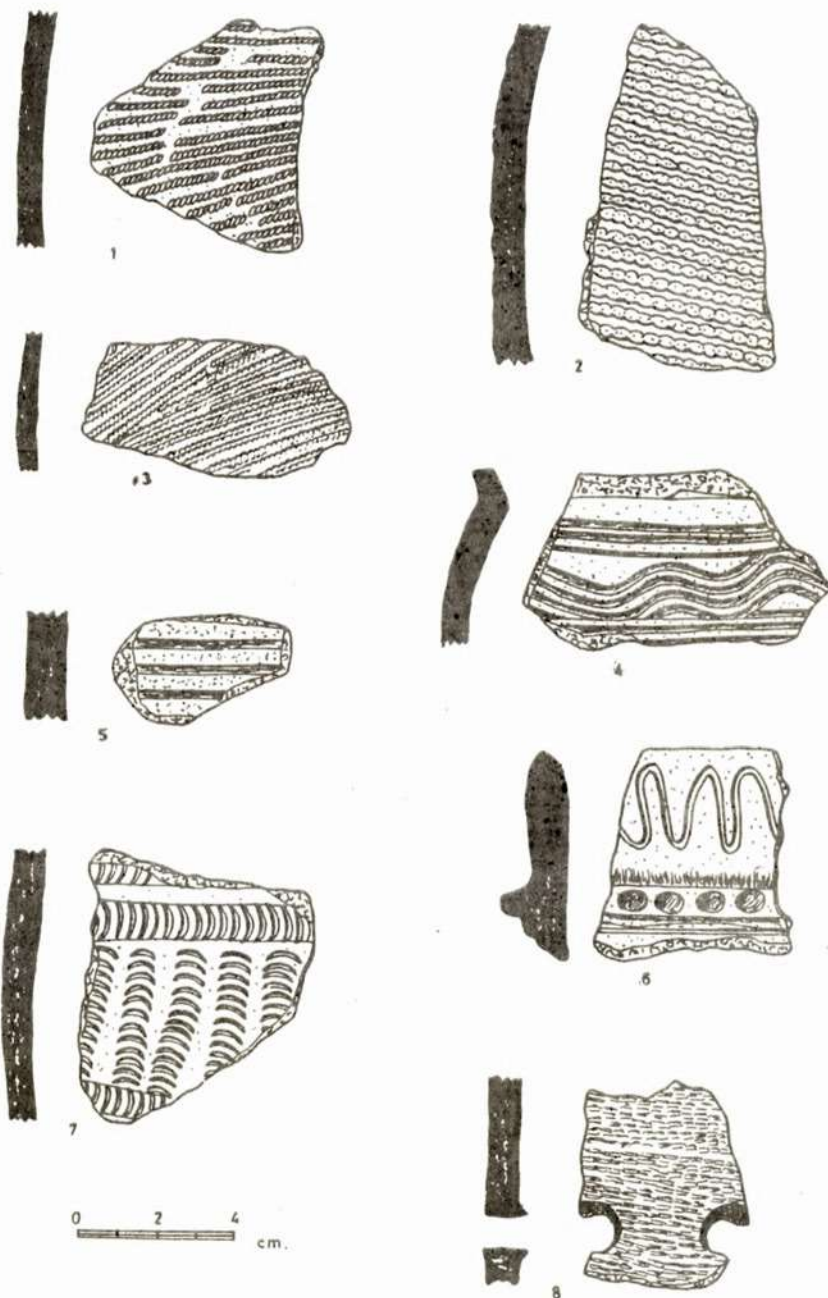


FIG. 36: Oketekatini (Idah) site - decorated sherds.

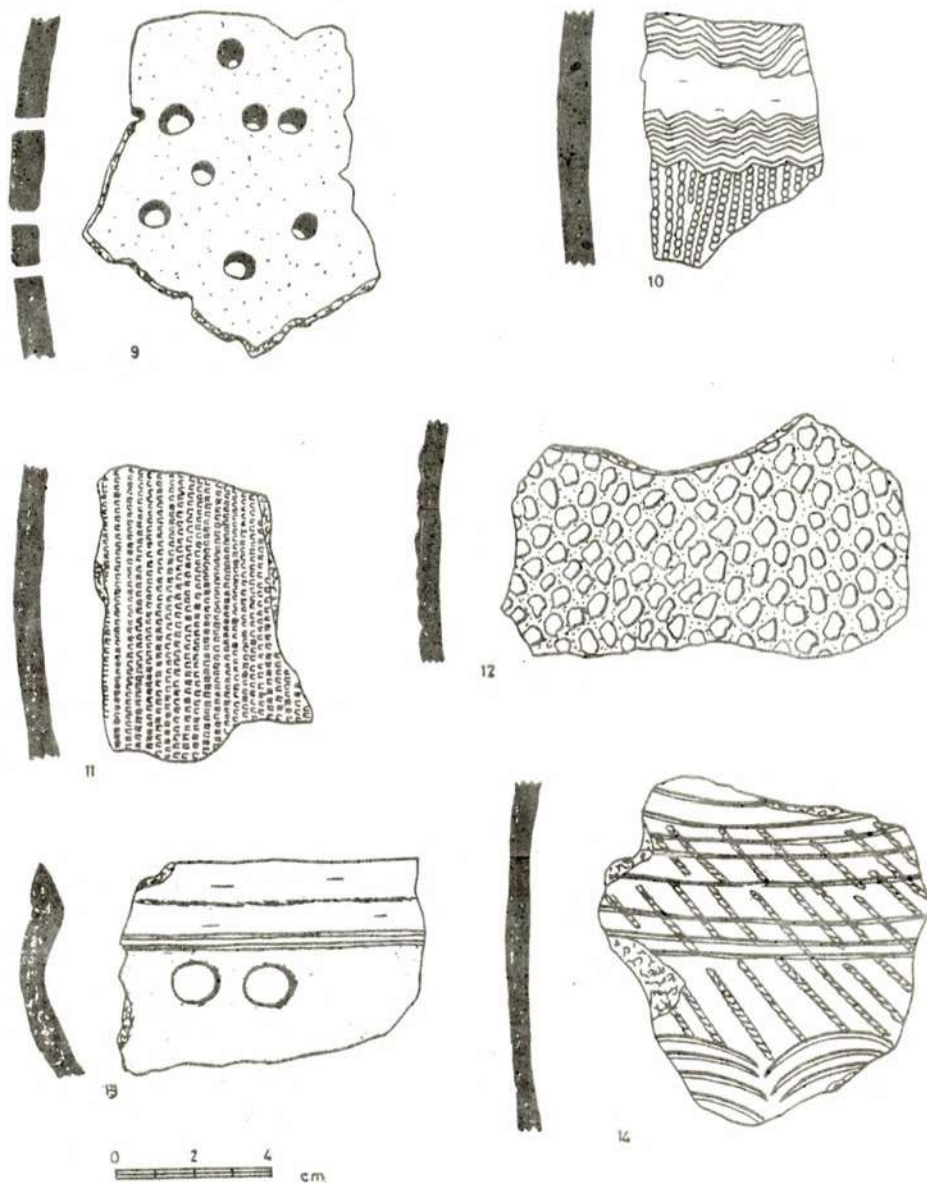


FIG. 36 Contd.

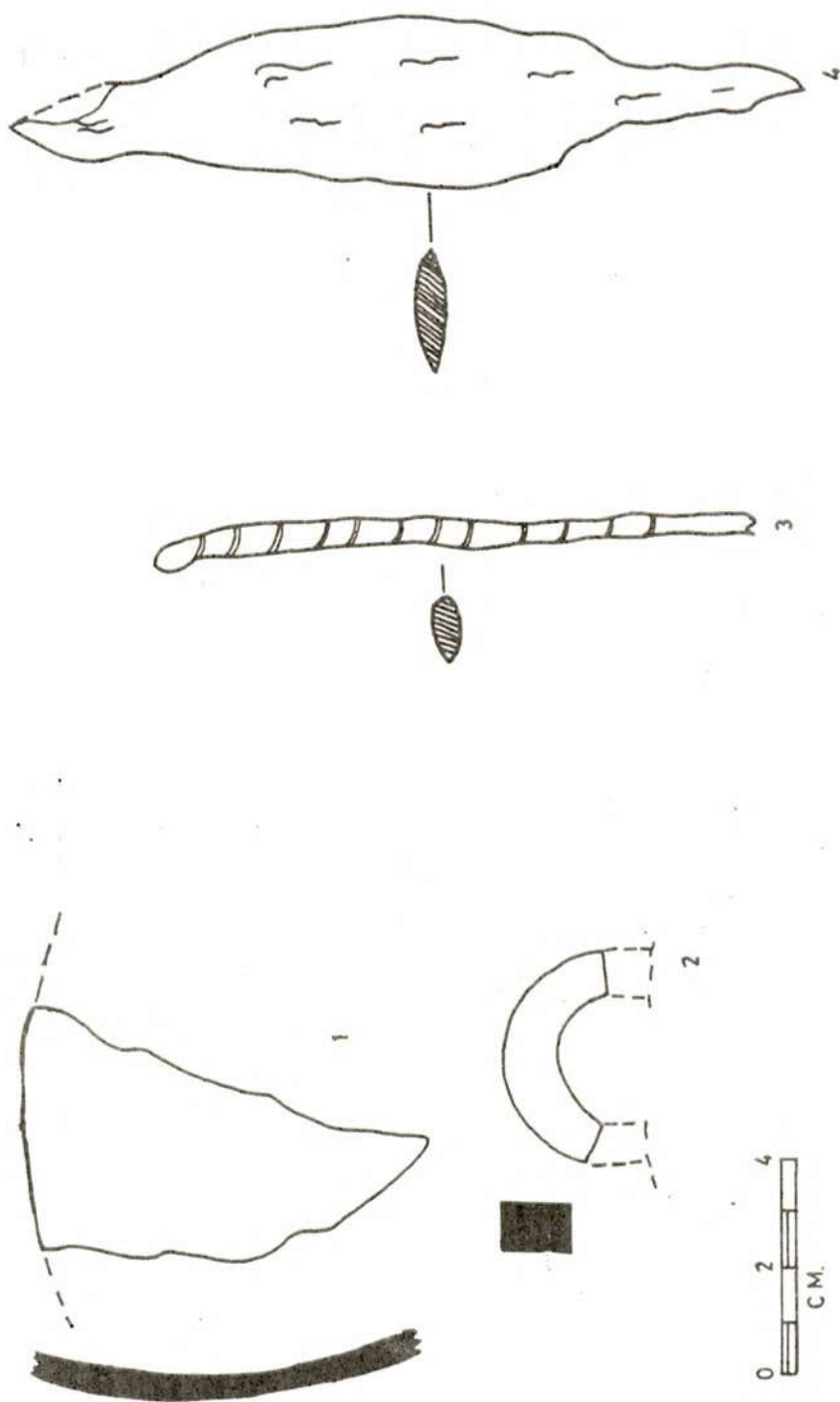


FIG. 37: Other sherds (besides rim and body sherds), a tanged knife and copper rod from Oketekakini (Idah).

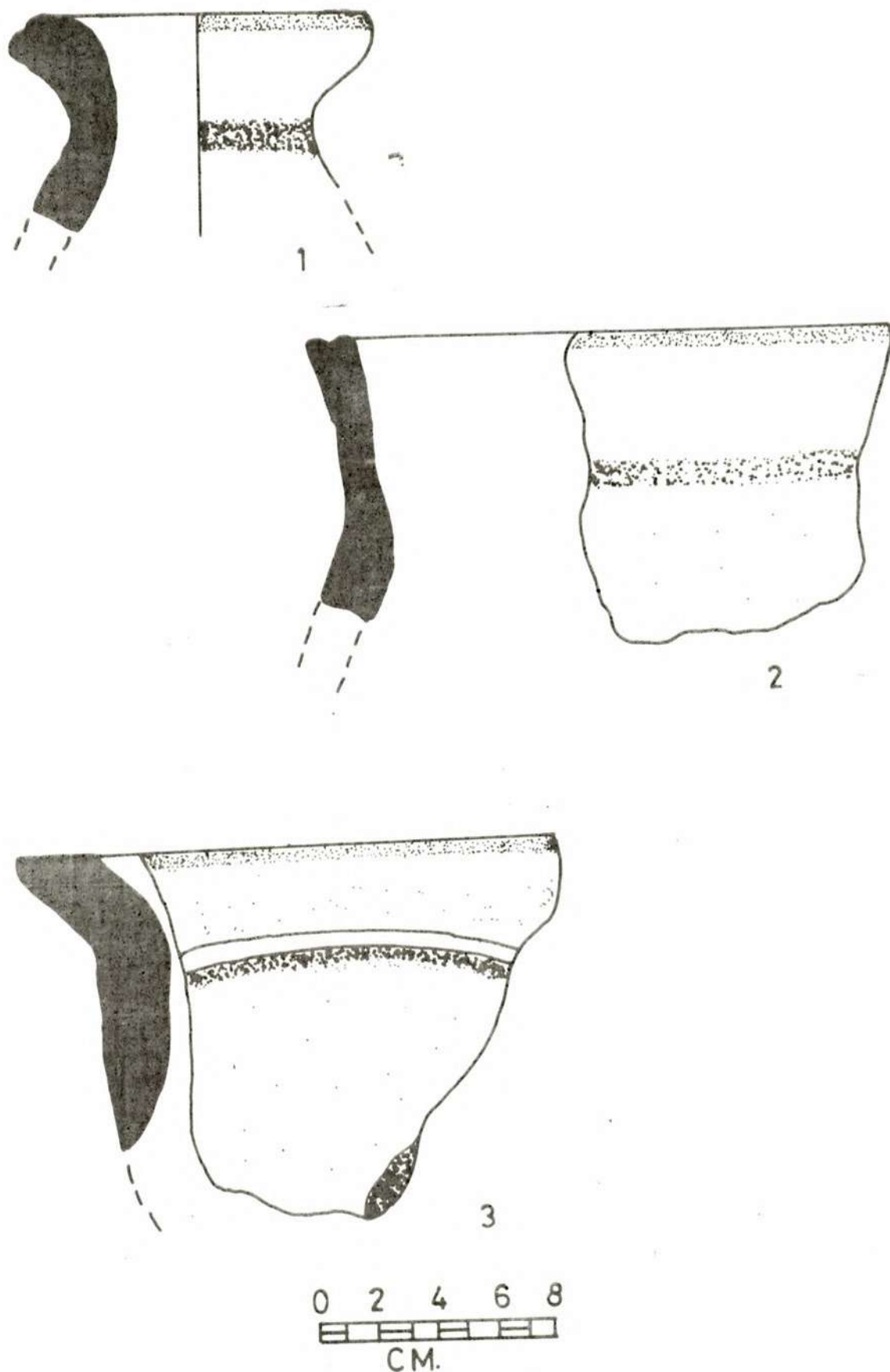


FIG. 38: Atida (Ogurugu); vessel types.

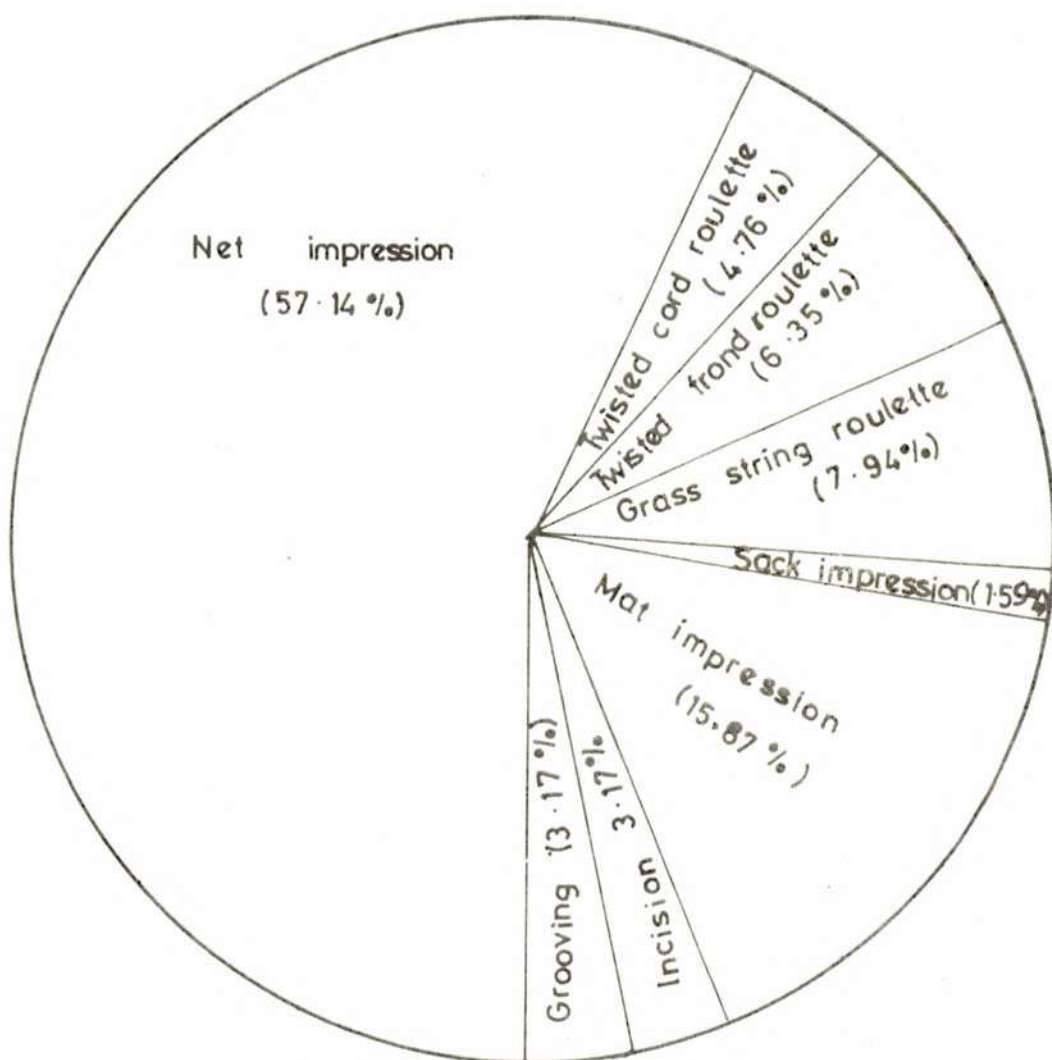


FIG. 39: Piechart of percentage occurrence of the decorative categories; Atida (Ogurungu).

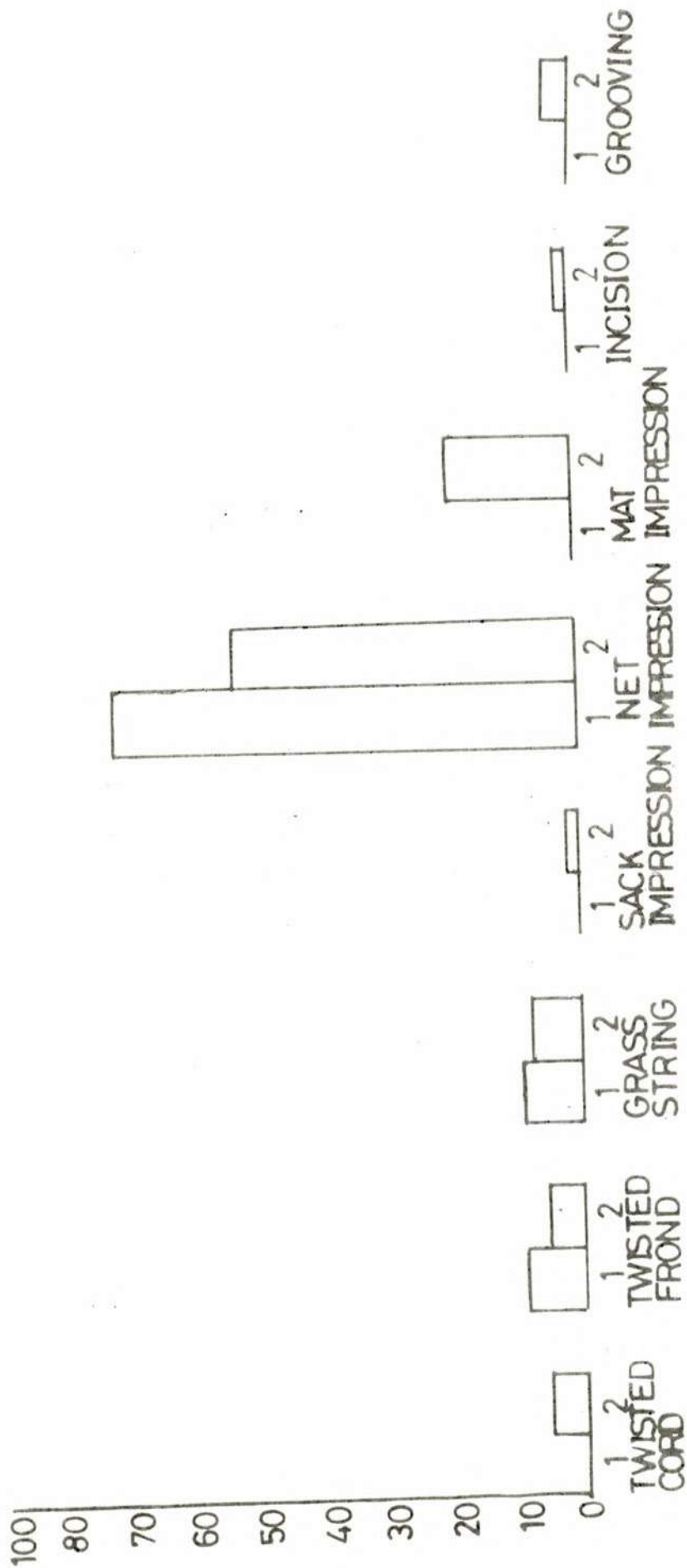


FIG. 40: Histogram of percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to stratigraphic layers - Atida (Ogurugu).

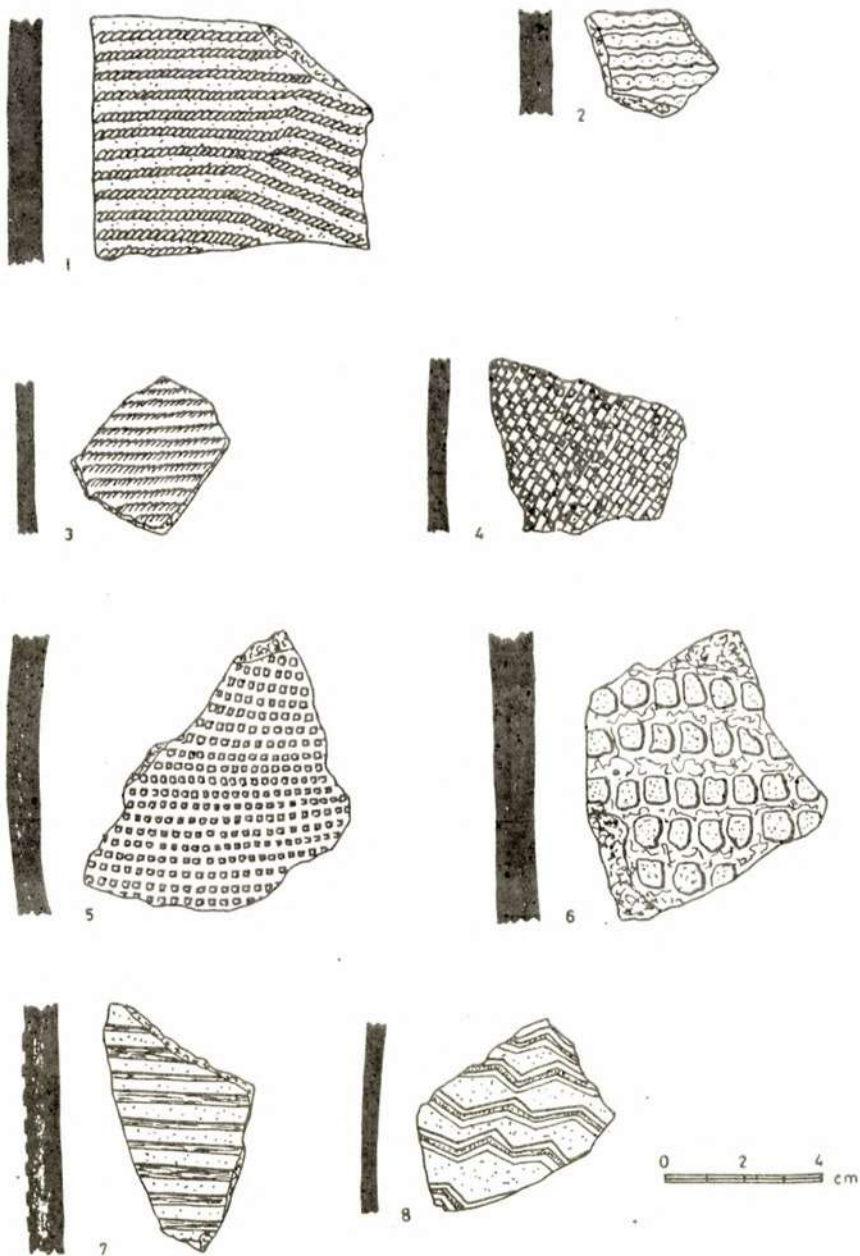


FIG. 41: Atida (Ogurugu); decorated sherds.

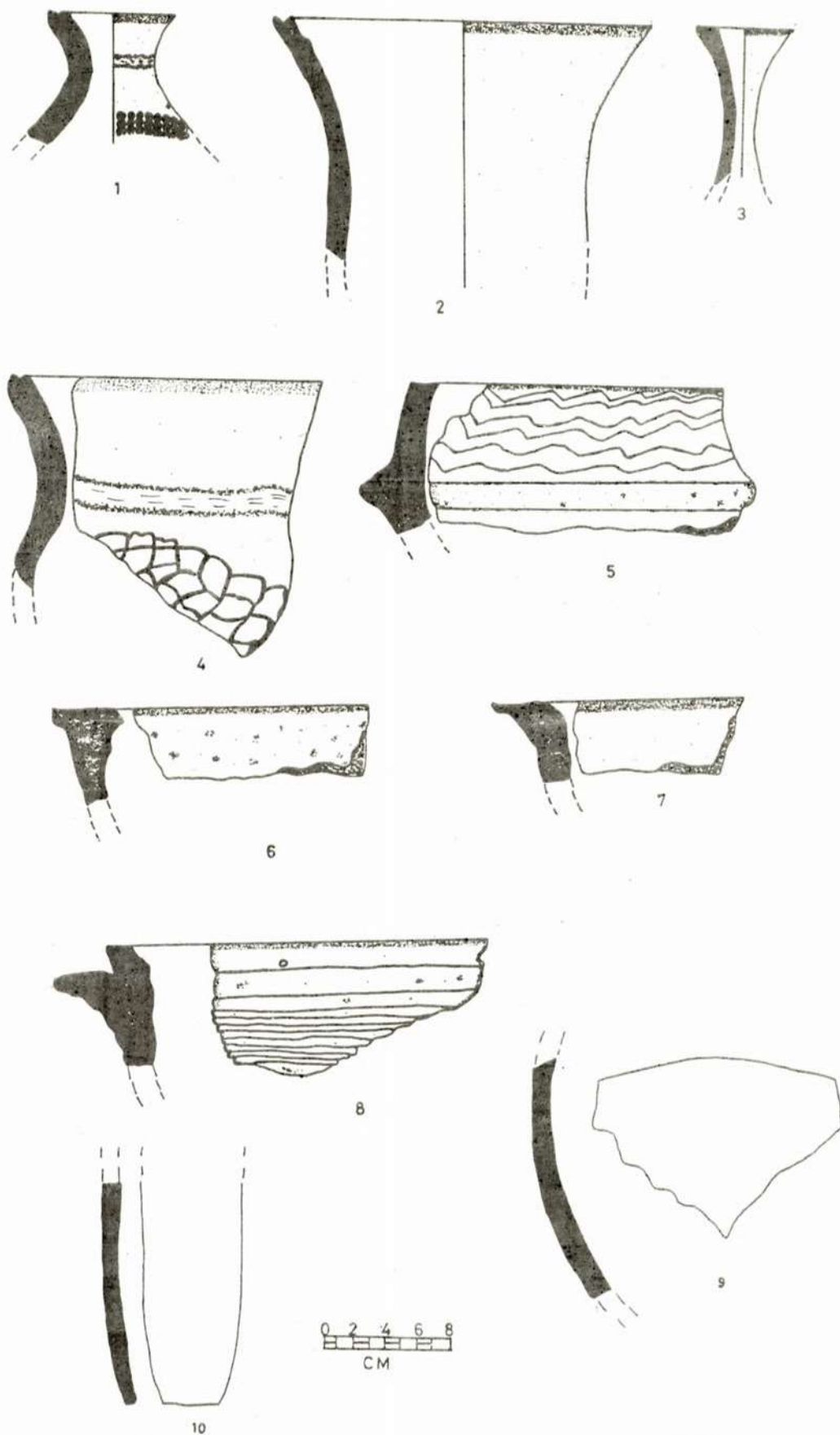


FIG. 42: Obatamu (Ogurugu); vessel types, a lid and reconstructed clay tuyère.

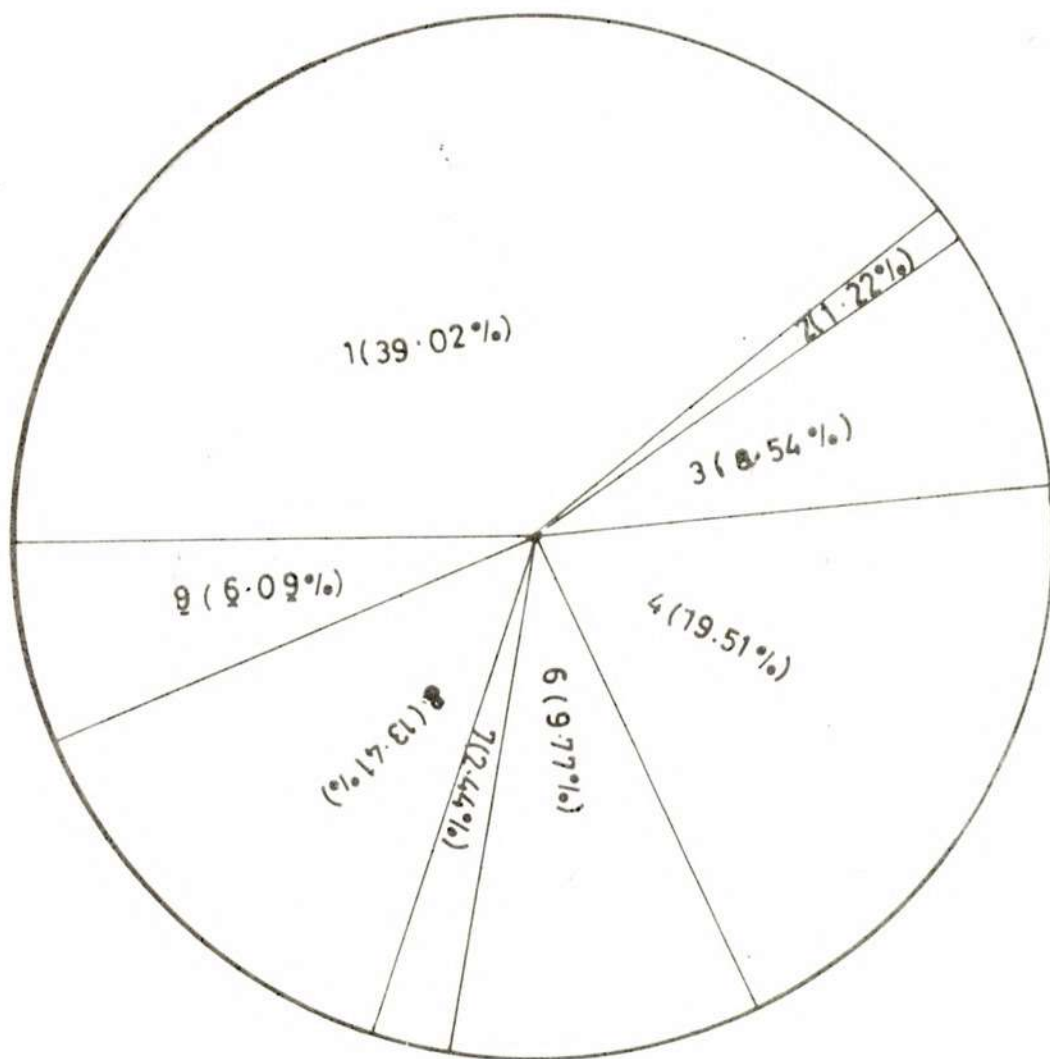


FIG. 43: Piechart of percentage occurrence of vessel types; Obatamu (Ogurugu).

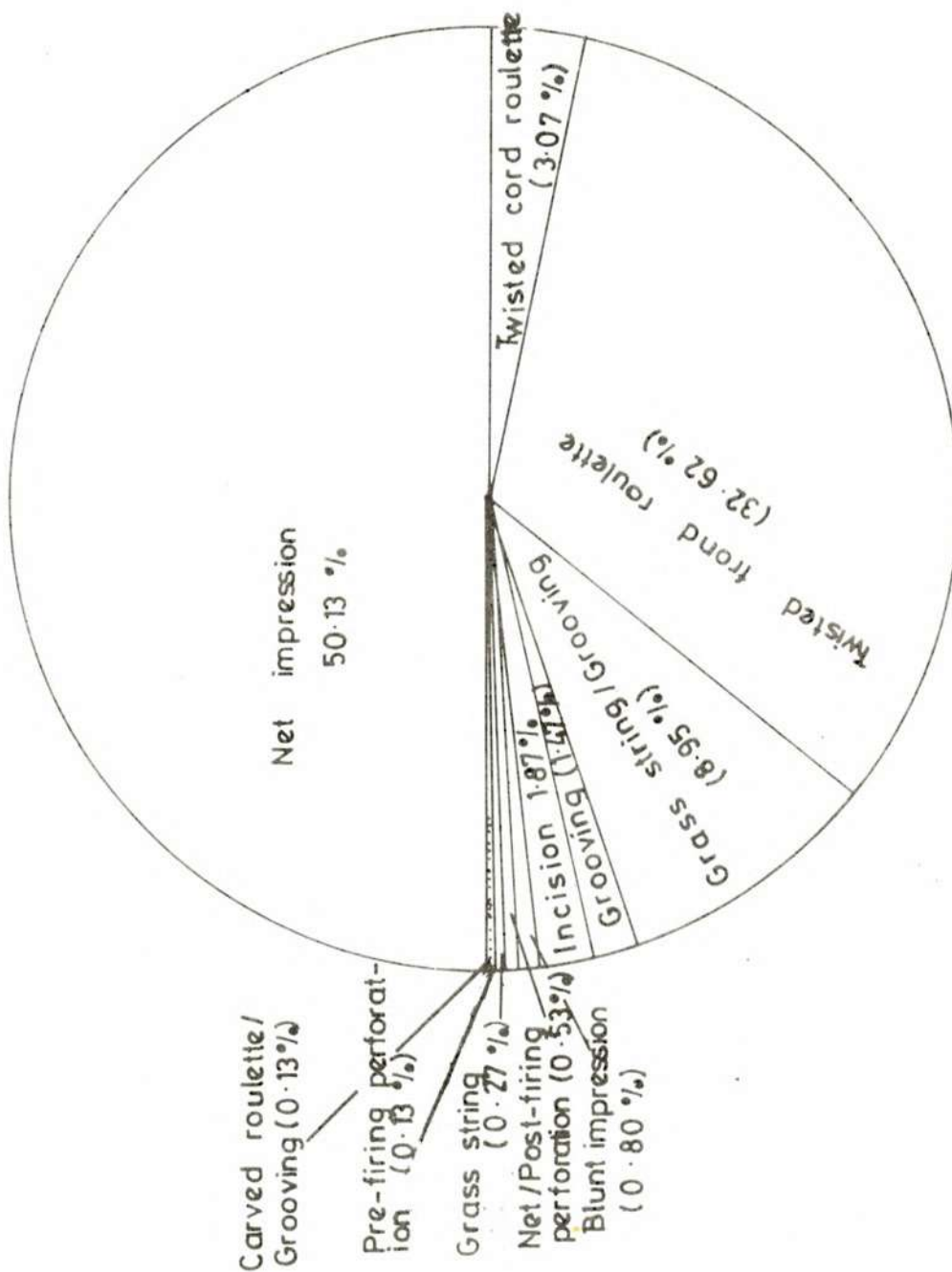


FIG. 44: Piechart of percentage occurrence of the decorative categories - Obatamu (Ogurugu); Test pit III.

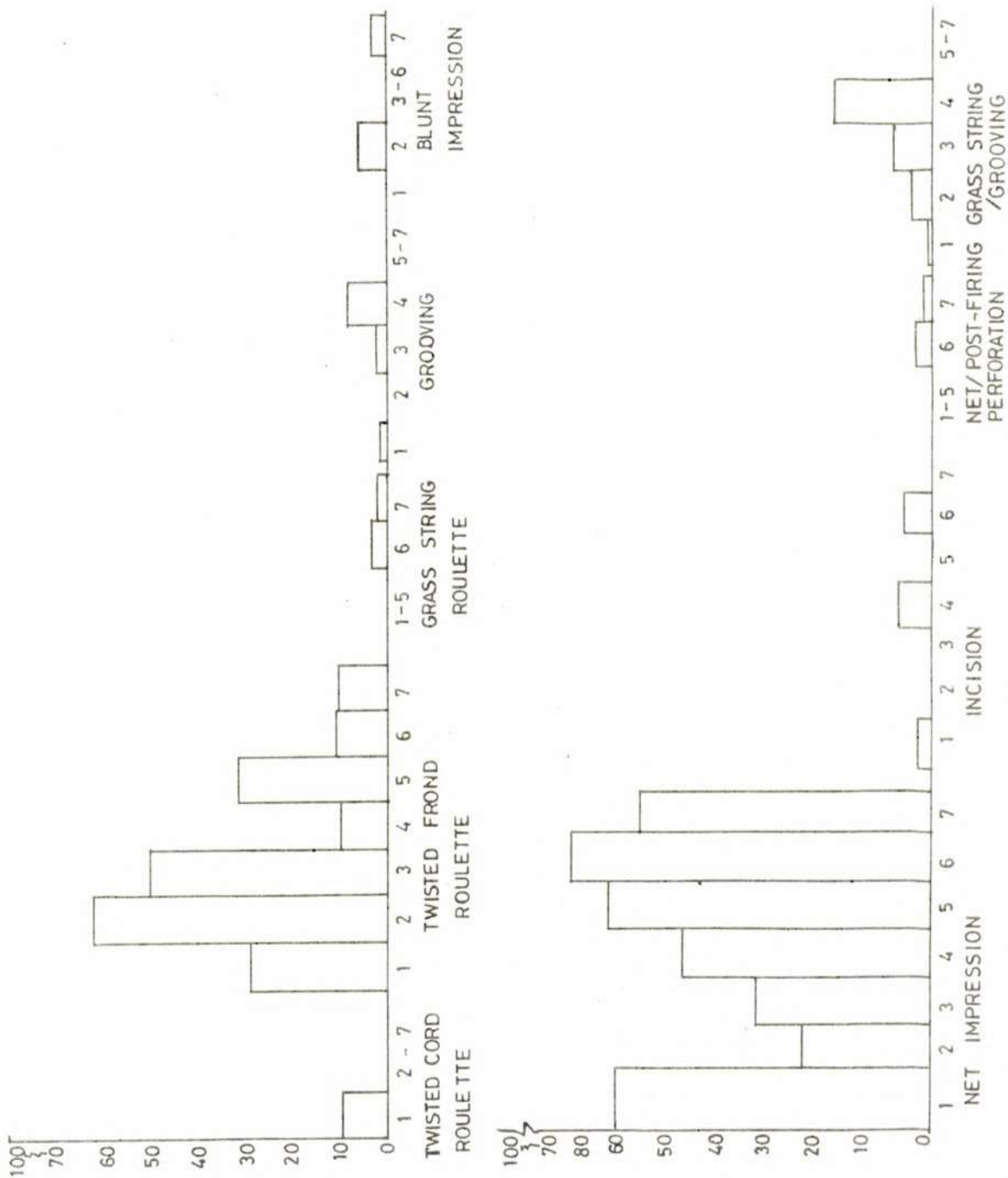
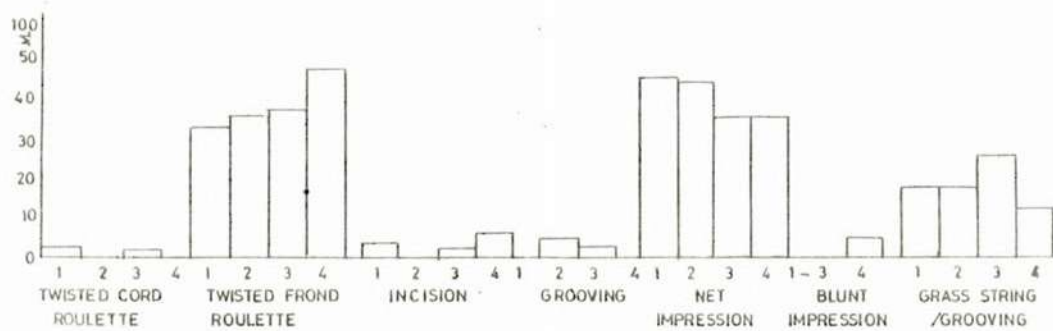
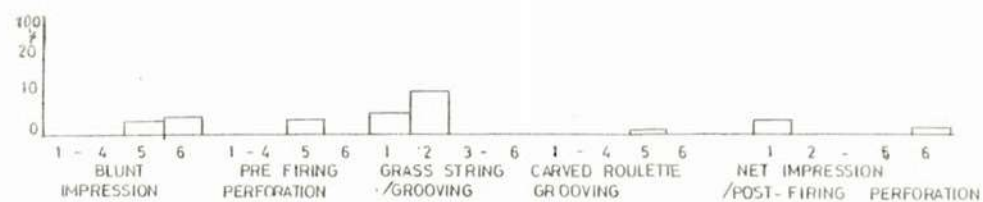
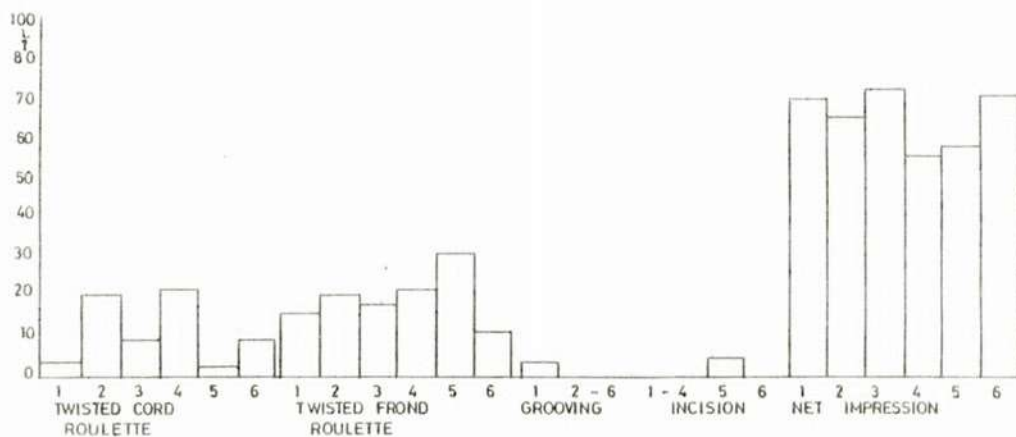


FIG. 45: Histogram of percentage distribution of the decorative categories according to spit levels - Obatamu (Oguru) test pit I.



Test pit II.



Test pit III.

FIG. 45: contd.

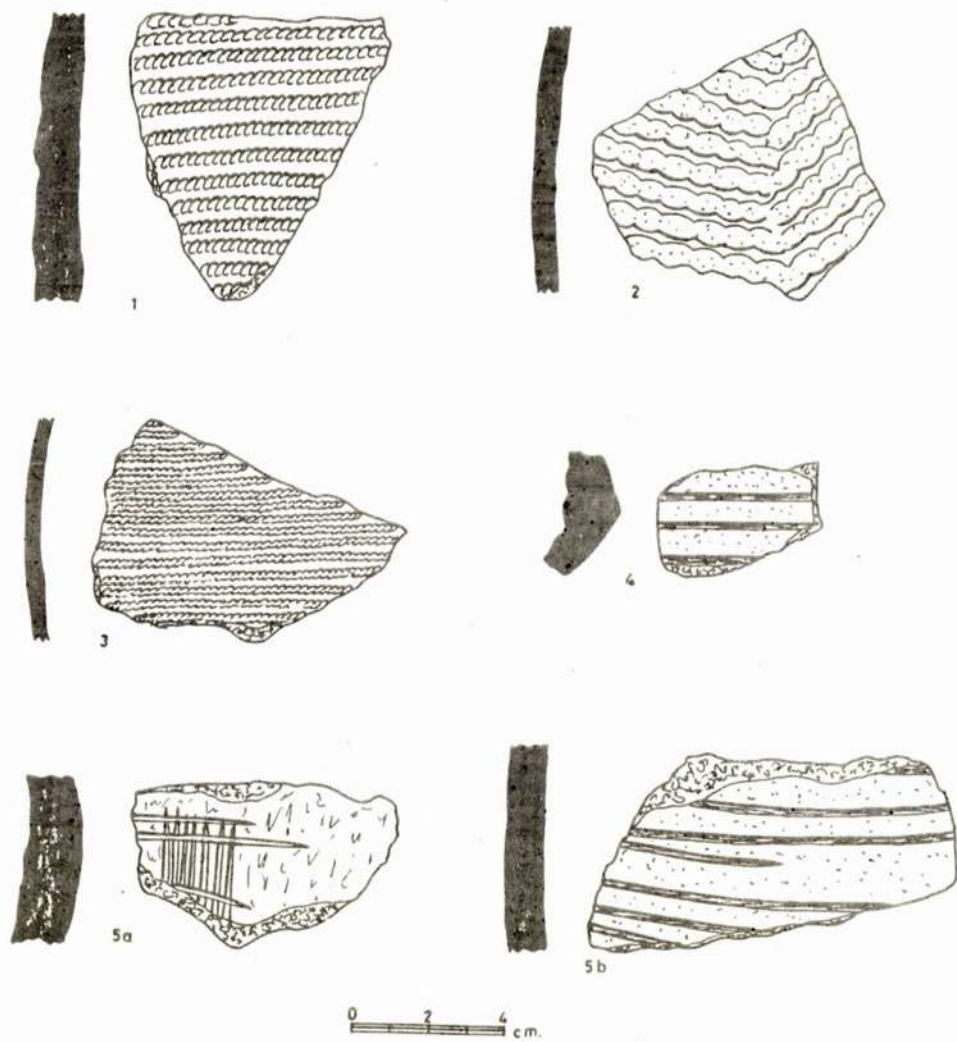


FIG. 46: Obatamu (Ogurugu) site - decorated sherds.

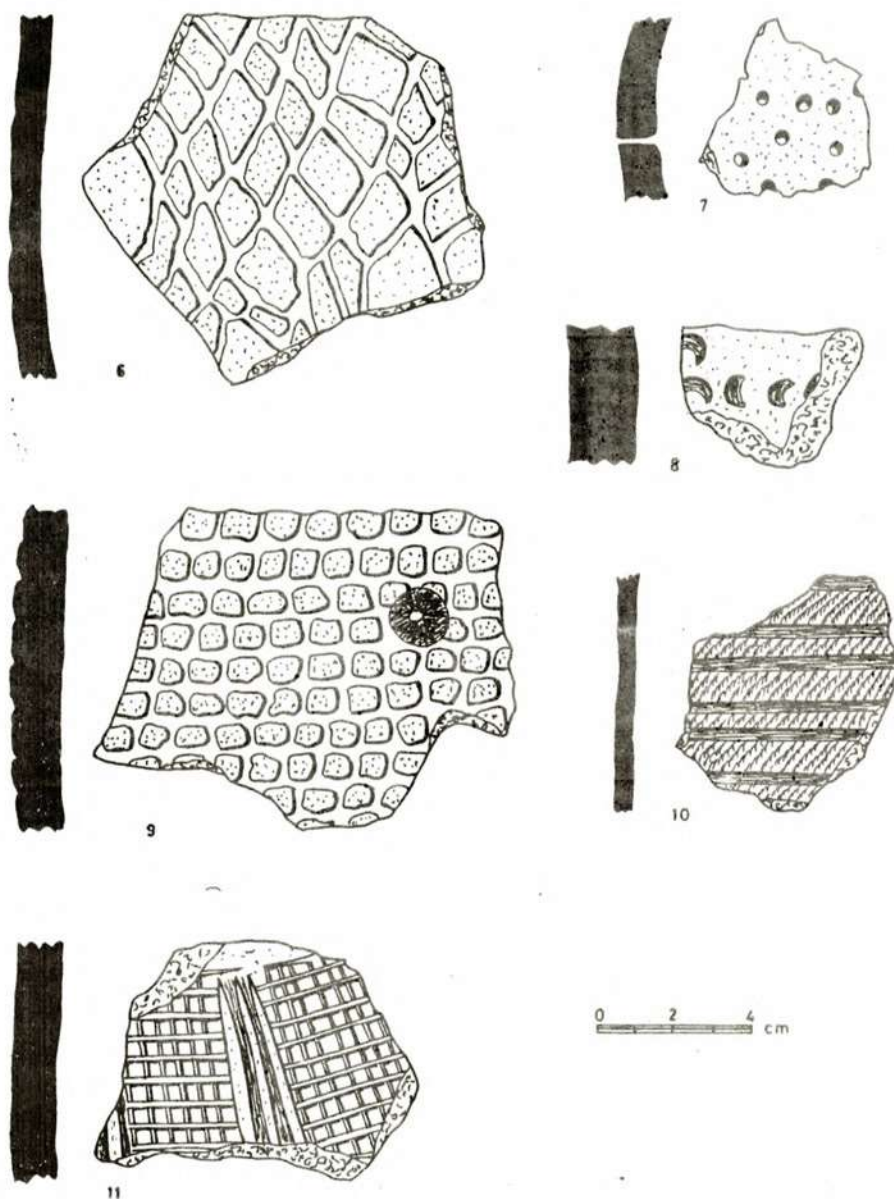


FIG. 46: Contd.

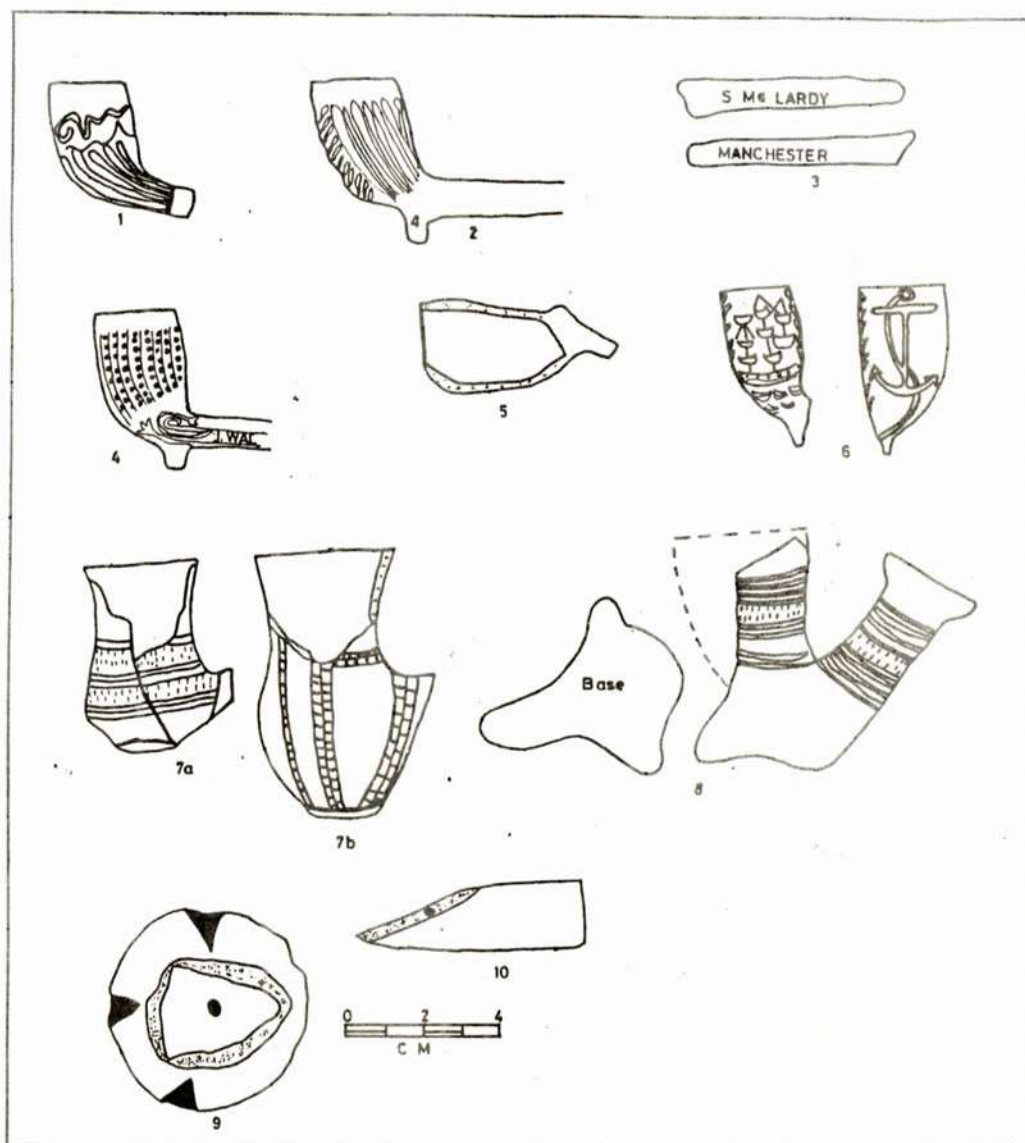


FIG. 47: Types of smoking pipes from Oketekakini (Idah).

Part ii

Historical and Traditional Evidence

P. A. Oguagha

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## Part II

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For a nation like Nigeria composed of a multiplicity of ethnic groups, the study of intergroup relations from a historical perspective is singularly relevant. Such studies can be broadly demarcated in three periods, namely, the pre-colonial, the colonial, and the post-colonial or independence periods (T. Hodgkin, 1975 p. 1-7).

It should be understood that by 'groups' in this study is meant units of people that possess identifiably distinct languages and cultures like the Igbo-, Igala-, Yoruba- or Edo-speaking peoples. This is quite different from the sub-divisions of an ethnic group such as the Onitsha and Abaliki Igbo, or the Oyo and Ijebu Yoruba. This distinction is important for an appreciation of the review of existing literature on such studies in Nigeria and the comments on sources.

#### A review of existing literature on intergroup relations in Nigeria

There is a dearth of published studies of intergroup relations in Nigeria. Some of the existing studies have largely focussed on interactions between sub-ethnic components of a larger group with a common language and a homogenous culture. One of such intra-group studies is S.O. Biobaku's study of the Egba and their neighbours (S.O. Biobaku, 1957) which is largely concerned with relations between the Egba Yoruba and its other Yoruba neighbours the Oyo, the Ijebu and the Ibadan. To a great extent Akinjogbin's study of Dahomey and its neighbours (I.A. Akinjogbin, 1967) structurally resembles Biobaku's book. It is a study of the political relationship between Dahomey and the sister Aja kingdoms of Allada, Whydah, Popo and Jakin in the eighteenth century. The limitation of the period of study and the concentration on political history would account for the emphasis on conflict in Akinjogbin's book; there is little on the economic, social, and cultural interactions between the Yoruba and Aja peoples.

A more detailed study of inter-relations between two distinct ethnic groups is Obaro Ikime's study of Itsekiri-Urhobo relations and this is relevant to Igbo-Igala problems (O. Ikime, 1969). It is an illuminating study meant to highlight the genesis of the conflict between both groups which had characterised their affairs in modern times. This he located in the nature of British penetration of Itsekiri and Urhobo territories and the subsequent colonial administrative system that was foisted on the two groups. Before this event occurred the coastal Itsekiri people and their Urhobo hinterland neighbours had a cordial and mutually beneficial connection. The pattern of contact was mainly economic and social with the Itsekiri bartering their salt and fish for Urhobo bulk foodstuffs like yams, maize and plantain. Both groups also intermarried. A new dimension was added to this pattern of communication with the arrival of the European slave traders along the coast from about the sixteenth century. In the new situation the Urhobo became the main suppliers of slaves to the Itsekiri middlemen traders who then sold them off to the Europeans. The Itsekiri

thus began to regard the Urhobo as a slave-supplying and socially inferior people, a superiority complex that later proved a subtle source of tension. Again the prolonged contact between the Itsekiri and the Europeans improved their knowledge of the English language and reinforced their condescending attitude to the Orhobo.

With the abolition of the slave trade and its substitution with the palm oil trade both groups came into closer contact. Palm oil came primarily from the Urhobo country and in order to promote their trade the Itsekiri merchants drifted to the periphery of Urhobo land where they established trading settlements and collection depots. In addition there was a significant increase in intermarriages as the Itsekiri attempted to enhance their business contacts in the hinterland. The palm oil trade based as it was on the "trust system" generated conflict between the two groups as contracting parties occasionally defaulted in their promises, giving rise to clashes.

British penetration of Itsekiri and Urhobo territories from 1884 brought the two groups into intimate political contact and laid the foundation for protracted conflict between them. Owing to the fact that the British subjugated the Itsekiri in the late nineteenth century and the fact that the Itsekiri understood the English language, they were recruited as aides in the subsequent penetration of Urhoboland. Thus the Itsekiri served as guides, carriers, messengers, and interpreters in the establishment of colonial rule in Urhobo land. As a result the Itsekiri formed a sub-elite in the administrative hierarchy in the area to the chagrin of the Urhobo who maintained that they had never come under the political tutelage of the Itsekiri. This tense situation was exacerbated by the arbitrary method of the establishment of Native Courts and the lopsided composition of their membership in favour of the Itsekiri.

However, due to the focus of the study on the colonial period, the discussion of the pre-colonial relationship is comparatively brief since it is meant to provide the background for understanding subsequent developments. Again, since the work is concerned mainly with political history, the economic and social relations, as well as cultural influences between both groups are not examined in detail.

Most directly related to the subject of this part are Boston's "Notes on Contact Between the Igala and the Ibo", (J.S. Boston, 1960), and Shelton's study of the Igbo-Igala Borderland (A.J. Shelton, 1971). Boston's article is a brilliant summary of the salient themes in Igbo-Igala communication. His study was based on Jeffrey's voluminous "Awka Division Intelligence Report" (M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1930) and Meek's "Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of the Nsukka Division", (C.K. Meek, 1930), in addition to his fieldwork in the Igala country. In the article he indicated the traditions of both groups about their early contact, early nineteenth century European reports about a flourishing trade between the Igbo and the Igala on the Niger, and the Igala and Igbo traditions about the legendary Igala warlord Onojo Ogboni. From his study Boston concluded that both Igbo and Igala traditions appeared to be more interested in Igala movement southwards into Igboland than Igbo movement northwards. This conclusion, it would appear, was based on Igala population movements downstream into Igbo territory and also Igala military incursion into parts of Igboland as preserved in the Onojo Ogboni traditions. As will be argued in chapter III, these were relatively recent developments in the prolonged communication between both groups and do not reflect the earlier pattern of

interaction. Thus apart from being too brief, the time-depth covered by the article is also limited. In addition Igbo influence on the Igala is not examined.

A.J. Shelton set out to show how the Igala, having subjugated the Nsukka Igbo communities, adopted an ingenious device for administration of the area. According to Shelton the main agents for Igala control of the area were Atama priests. He postulated that the logic behind this innovative imperial administration was Igala perception of the overwhelming importance of the earth deity priest in Igbo political organization as the key intermediary between the gods and the community (A.J. Shelton, 1971, pp. 209-217). Shelton's book is essentially a sociological dissertation on Igala religious influence in the Nsukka Igbo area in the nineteenth century based on the notion that the Igala overran the Nsukka Igbo communities, a conclusion which Shelton drew from the Onojo Ogboni traditions and the presence of Atama shrine priests in Igbo and Igala communities (A.J. Shelton, 1971, pp. 20-23 and 1968).

However, it would seem that Shelton's study neglected the fact that there were two main centres of Igala influence on Igboland, namely, Idah and Ogurugu. While from Idah radiated political, ritual, and economic influence into parts of Igboland, from Ogurugu emanated military strikes into Igbo and parts of Igala country too arising from an entirely different impulse. It would be misleading to confuse the impact of these developments by attributing all evidence of Igala influence to military conquest. In any case it will be shown that there were reciprocal influences on both cultures and that it was not a unidirectional flow. Also Shelton's study does not cover the communications between the riverain Igbo communities and the Igala, as well as the Awka and Nri Igbo who had ancient and close connections with the Igala. Furthermore the main focus of the study is the nature of Igala religious influence in Igboland and is not a historical study as such.

Akintoye's article "The North-Eastern Districts of the Yoruba Country and the Benin Kingdom" A. Akintoye, 1969, p. 539-40; 544-5) is a study of the modes of contact between Benin and the Yoruba groups of Akoko, Ekiti, and Owo. This article clarified the origins and avenues for the percolation of Ede cultural traits into the north-eastern part of Yorubaland. Edo cultural imprints within the area are manifested in Benin titles such as Ologbosere, and Ojomo, the use of Benin royal regalia including coral beads and oval swords, Edo music and dance patterns, traditions of migration from Benin, and Edo influence on the Yoruba dialect of the communities. The initial avenue for contact was trade, and north-east Yorubaland was an important commercial sector within which a guild of Benin traders travelled extensively and established trading settlements along the major routes.

Subsequently, with the rise of Benin kingdom and its military expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries north-east Yorubaland was overrun by Benin armies. The motive behind this appeared to have been to control the trade routes and to collect tributes from the Yoruba towns and villages. Some Yoruba princes were also taken hostage and received training at the Benin royal court whence they returned later as propagators of Edo culture in their principalities. The political influence in north-east Yorubaland became so overwhelming that the Oba's sanction was needed before the enthronement of a new king in the various communities (S.A. Akintoye, 1969, p. 550). However, with the decline of Benin Kingdom's political power in

the eighteenth century, Yoruba towns reasserted their autonomy. Subsequent attempts by Benin to regain its foothold in the area were effectively repulsed as many of communities had acquired firearms. However, this is a micro-study and does not cover Benin relations with other Yoruba communities like Ife, Ijebu, and Lagos who have traditions of contact with Benin kingdom. Also, while Benin influence on the north-east Yoruba kingdoms is highlighted, there is no indication of similar changes in the Edo culture.

R.E. Bradbury's imaginative study of Oyo and Ife Yoruba and their connection with the Benin kingdom has shown how the different cultural backgrounds of both groups affected the development of their monarchical institutions in spite of traditions of common origin from Ile Ife. (R.E. Bradbury 1973, pp. 3-16). Although Yoruba and Benin traditions stated that Oranmiyan, an Ile Ife prince, founded both Oyo and Benin dynasties, their evolution differed remarkably, with the Benin monarchy emerging as a comparatively more powerful political institution than its Oyo counterpart. Among the ingredients in Edo culture that accounted for a strong Benin monarchy was the principle of primogeniture for succession to political offices. This meant that the role of the Uzama chiefs in Benin was more of king crowners than king makers. Secondly, the presence of open titles in Edo culture enabled the Oba of Benin to strengthen his political base against that of the Uzama through the appointment of new chiefs who owed direct allegiance to the king. Thirdly, the absence of widely based lineages as effective political units in Edo culture reduced the weight of opposition which could challenge the tendency to monarchical autocracy. Lastly, the typical village pattern of settlement among the Edo as reflected in the ward organization of Benin City was to the advantage of the king. This was because unlike in the Yoruba setting the wards were mainly settlements for specialist groups whose heads were not representatives of lineages who could oppose the king's authority.

On the other hand certain features of the Yoruba culture inhibited the emergence of an autocratic monarchy. Firstly, the rotational principle for succession to political offices meant that the traditional kingmakers like the Oyomesi in Oyo kingdom were more powerful than the Benin Uzama since they selected and crowned the Alafin. Secondly, the presence of widely based lineages as effective political units with hereditary rights to land and political titles, constituted a formidable limitation to monarchical autocracy. Indeed, they could call for the dethronement of a tyrannical king. Thirdly, there was absent in Yoruba culture open titles which the Alafin could manipulate to consolidate his political base against the Oyomesi. Finally, the urban type of settlement in Yorubaland in which some chiefs controlled parts of the capital city as representatives of particular descent groups, further curtailed the potential for the rise of an absolute sovereign. (R.E. Bradbury, 1973 p.10-16). The merit of Bradbury's essay which was based on a superb mastery of two distinct cultural units lies in the explanation of the underlying reasons for the modifications of some political institutions which had a common genesis. In this way it represents the contribution of anthropological investigations to our understanding of the historical process within particular ethnic groups, and the importance of interdisciplinary studies for the reconstruction of the early history of Nigerian societies.

In his article "A Reconsideration of the Ife-Benin Relationship", A.F.C. Ryder (1965) questioned the historical accuracy of current Edo traditions which affirm that the Benin dynasty was an offshoot of that of Ile Ife. The core of Ryder's arguments was based on new evidence from

European documentary sources and archaeological data. Traditions recorded by European visitors to Benin in the fifteenth century stated that the kingdom owed allegiance to Ogane, a potentate who lived to the east of Benin. Ile Ife lies to the west of Benin and so could not have been the seat of the Ogane. If the present Ile Ife was to be accepted as having wielded political and spiritual influence over Benin two probabilities had to be considered. The first was the likelihood that there was a change in allegiance from the Ogane to the east, to Ile Ife in the west at some period in Benin History. The second was that the present site of Ile Ife "is the final resting - place of a fugitive dynasty".

Archaeological excavations carried out at Ile Ife and Benin would seem to indicate that Benin City was probably an older town than Ile Ife. Potsherd pavements in Ile Ife have been dated to the first decades of the sixteenth century and the older town walls of Ile Ife were of much later dates. Benin City on the other hand was an impressive place by 1485 according to European eye witness accounts, and may have reached that stage much earlier. Again the Edo tradition which associates the beginning of brass casting in Benin with the arrival of the Ile Ife prince poses further problems about the historical validity of the dynastic connection. Ife has no tradition of brass casting while the art still flourishes in Benin City. Also brass works recovered in Ife would seem to have been produced within a relatively short time unlike Benin brass objects which stylistically show evidence of development over a long period. The close similarity between Benin bronze objects and those found in the Nupe country, in addition to some oral traditions in Benin about the reigns of Oba Ewuare and Oba Esigie, would make Ryder believe that the origin of Benin dynasty lay in the Nupe-Igala area of the Niger-Benue Confluence.

It would seem from Ryder's article that Edo traditions about the origin of Benin dynasty have changed over the years. The first was the account recorded by the Europeans in the fifteenth century about the Ogane. The second was recorded in 1823 and traced the origin of the dynasty to "a white man who came from the great water", which Ryder thought referred to the river Niger. Then came the traditions about Ife origins which emerged after the British occupation of Benin in 1897. Lately, however, Akinola has highlighted what appears to be a revision of the traditions about Benin dynastic connections with Ile Ife. (G.A. Akinola, 1976). According to the new traditions the prince who came from Ile Ife was not a Yoruba prince but rather a descendant of a former Benin prince called Ekaladerhan who was banished from the kingdom and eventually took refuge in Ile Ife. The aims of these new traditions are summarised in this way by Akinola:

'What the new traditions seek to establish is an unbroken link between the Ogoiso era in Benin and that of the Obas while denying the seniority of the Ife monarchy as well as the Benin dynasty's allegiance to it.

While the aims of the revised versions can be identified, the issue of the underlying social and political developments that brought them about are generally more problematic. However, like Akintoye's article, the studies by Bradbury, Ryder, and Akinola deal with an aspect of Benin relationship with the Yoruba.

### Igbo-Igala relationships.

As has been pointed out the long accepted view has been that in the contacts between the Igbo and the Igala the migration pattern has been largely from Igala country into Igboland. This view is based on the traditions of origin of some Igbo towns located along the Niger and Anambra rivers, and in the Nasukka area. The traditions of attacks from Ogurugu, an Igala town, on parts of Igboland are also adduced as evidence of this north-south movement. (J.S. Boston, 1960 p.52; A.J. Shelton, 1971 p.19-23; S.C. Ukpabi, 1976 p.104-6).

Another widely held view is that parts of northern Igboland were conquered and administered by the Igala. This also relied upon the traditions of attacks of parts of Igboland by Onojo Ogboni from Ogurugu; the practice by which some Igbo rulers visited Idah the Igala capital to receive their titles; the appendage of Igala titles after the names of some Nsukka towns, and the atama priests found in parts of Igboland. (C.K. Meek, 193 p.7-12; A.J. Shelton, 1971 p.23,190,204).

Apart from the preceding histories, there are major gaps in the existing evidence of Igbo-Igala contacts. The first is related to the economic relations between both groups. Writers have tended to emphasize their commercial relations along the Niger in which the Igala and the Igbo kingdom of Aboh featured prominently. (D. Northrup, 1972, R.N. Henderson, 1972, K.O. Ogedengbe, 1971). This could be due to the availability of written accounts on this topic by European traders and missionaries in the nineteenth century. But there has not been an adequate attention given to the mainland trade between the two peoples from where most of the commodities transported along the Niger were supplied. Afigbo in his article "Trade and Trade Routes in Nineteenth Century Nsukka" (A. Afigbo, 1973) mentions the contributions of the Igala to the commercial life of the area. In another article, "Precolonial Trade Links between Southeastern Nigeria and the Benue Valley", Afigbo (1977) summarises the nature of the trade between the Igbo and the Igala, the Idoma, and the Tiv. However, while the trade along the waterways between the Igbo and Igala was adequately examined, the overland commerce contained more about Igala activities in Igboland, and the Igala side of the study was consigned to a further investigation.

In terms of the movement of ideas between both peoples the impression one gets from the literature is that of pronounced Igala influence in Igboland (eg C.K. Meek, 1930, M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1930). This situation is due to a lack of detailed anthropological investigation of Southern Igala communities. The Igbo, on the other hand, received close attention from the colonial officers as a result of the Aba women's riot. It will be shown in this study that there was a mutual flow of influences between the two peoples. Along the Niger, Igala influence was more cultural, while on the mainland it was more political. Igbo influence on the Igala was more social, cultural and linguistic, and was most noticeable among the Igala inhabitants of the Anambra river basin.

In this study, the impact of the overseas trade on the pattern of relationships between the two groups has been taken into consideration. The new trade did not only bring about increased commercial intercourse between them, it also led to new political developments. Thus the trade was chronologically and thematically significant in the development of their

relations. It is for these reasons that it was decided to examine the pattern of their interactions before the changes generated by the overseas trade.

Another aspect of the interactions between the Igbo and the Igala that will be examined in this study concerns changes in their political relationships. This development has been placed after the examination of the economic relations because it was essentially its offshoot. It has also been chosen as a separate theme because of the prominence it has been accorded by writers on relations between both groups. (eg. A.J. Shelton, 1971). It was indicated that as a result of the increase in the Lower Niger trade some communities along the waterways grew wealthy and powerful. They subsequently began to raid neighbouring towns and villages to capture slaves and to control the trade routes. The raids did not discriminate on ethnic grounds and were carried out mainly by wealthy merchants and their followers. One of the communities that engaged in such attacks on its neighbours was the Igala town of Ogurugu located on the Anambra river. The raids from Ogurugu which affected both the Igbo and the Igala have been misinterpreted as a conscious imperial venture in Igboland by the Igala.

There will also be an attempt here to establish the historicity or otherwise of the legendary Igala warrior Onojo Ogboni, and to date the period of his attacks. Since the belief that parts of Igboland were conquered by the Igala has largely been inferred from certain developments in their interactions, such as the visits to Idah for the conferment of titles by some Igbo rulers, there was a reappraisal of these features to show what inspired them. The consequences of the attacks on Igboland and what brought them to an end are also examined.

It is worth pointing out that the tendency to emphasize conflict as the dominant theme in intergroup relations is not limited to the two groups under study. A number of reasons could be adduced for this aberration. The first is that wars are dramatic in nature and give rise to heroic moments that are easily remembered and preserved in the oral traditions. Since oral traditions constitute the main source for the reconstruction of the history of pre-literate peoples, traditions of conflict are accordingly disproportionately reflected especially in the political history of the groups affected. Again eras of expansion represent glorious epochs in the memory of the conquerors and so are accordingly emphasised in oral traditions. From the European perspective, the emphasis on warfare as the major means of cultural influence may have arisen because their civilization was spread through conquests. As will be shown in the case of the Igbo and the Igala, the period of conflict was relatively short in the long span of their interactions and could not account for the discernible influences. Furthermore, cultural imprints from non-expansionist groups found within the imperialist states should serve as a caveat against such monocausal explanations.

The effect of centuries of interactions between the Igbo and the Igala on each other's culture will also be examined. In trying to establish the origin of the ideas encountered in both groups three possibilities have been taken into consideration. The first is that of independent invention by which both societies evolved the ideas or items out of their own genius. The second is the probability of foreign influence in which a particular idea was derived from another society either through trade, migration, or even warfare. The third is the possibility of a common outside source of derivation. Also implied within the first category is the fact that

similarities may point to universal characteristic features for the inhabitants of a particular region, or the speakers of a language family. From a theoretical point of view it could be argued that where a feature is more elaborated and more widespread constitutes a likely centre of diffusion, since such developments take time and so indicate longer duration. Nevertheless, oral traditions about such institutions or ritual practices as well as the names for various institutions form useful guides about their source of origin.

#### The contribution of linguistics.

In this study the contribution linguistics, has helped in establishing the probable origins of speakers of The Kwa sub-family, or West African languages with which this study will be concerned. These are the West Atlantic, the Mande or Manding, the Gur, the Kwa, and the Benue-Congo branches. This sub-family includes more than sixty-three language units of which the best known groups include Kru, Baule, Twi, Ga, Ewd, Fon, Yoruba, Nupe, Igbo, Idoma, and perhaps Ijo and Efik. Even among the Kwa languages it is known that some languages are more closely related to one another than they are to other members of the group. For example, the Igala language is more closely related to Oyo Yoruba, while the Edo language is "insignificantly closer to Ibo than to Yoruba". (R.E. Bradbury, 1973, p.7-8).

Such classifications are of historical interest especially in locating possible centres of population dispersal. The theory adopted by linguists in fixing a centre of origin for language groups is either that this is most likely to be found near the centre of the language family's major branches or else where one finds the greatest variation of languages belonging to the group. Thus it is implied, that geographical spread of language group and its complexity denote age, since such developments take time, and by extension qualify as possible centres of origin. It is on this basis that the dispersal point for speakers of the Kwa group of languages has been located in the Niger-Benue Confluence region where the densest clusters of this group of languages are found. (R.N. Henderson, 1972, pp. 38-39. It must be noted, however, that Henderson's conclusion may not always be true).

It is obvious that comparative linguistics may provide a useful aid for cross-checking the historical validity of traditions of migrations found among language groups. Thus it could be inferred for instance from the close relationship between Igala and Yoruba languages, that the Igala people are of Yoruba stock and constitute a spill-over of Yoruba population eastwards across the Niger. (M. Clifford, 1936, p. 305, R.G. Armstrong, 1967, p.78-79). This implies that the Yoruba, like the other Kwa language group speakers in Nigeria, migrated from the Niger-Benue confluence to their present location. It was from this area that the Igala later dispersed to the east of the Niger. (See also A. Adetugbo, 1974).

Another important aspect of linguistics is the diachronic aspect of the discipline called historical linguistics. Lexicostatistics and glottochronology study the process of language change over time. By this method an analysis of a standard list of words of two related languages claims to provide an estimate of the duration of their separation from an ancestral stock. By this reckoning the separation period for Oyo Yoruba and Edo of Benin from the ancestral Kwa stock is computed at between 3,200 years and 4,600 years; that for Yoruba and Igbo somewhere between 4,000 and

6,000 years; and for Igala Oyo Yoruba we have 2,000 years. It is further estimated by Armstrong that "the language ancestral to the Niger-Congo family cannot have been spoken more recently than ten thousand years ago, and that it probably lies much deeper in the past than that". (R.G. Armstrong, 1967, p. 12-13).

The historical implication of such figures is the antiquity of many of the peoples in Nigeria and these figures may be useful indices of the length of time during which the various languages and culture groups have existed as independent units. After an examination of the age and similarity of Yoruba, Edo, and Igbo languages, R.E. Bradbury (1973, p.7) wrote:

There is no reason to suppose that the divergence of these languages from a parent stock has not taken place side by side more or less in situ. Any theory which would derive the carriers of one of them, en masse, from far afield, when the others were already established in the area, would raise historico-linguistic difficulties of great magnitude.

Benin, Ibo, and Yoruba culture, as we know them today, are certainly the product of a long process of development within what is today Nigeria. Moreover they must already have been clearly differentiated from each other at the earliest period to which oral traditions can be assumed to refer.

While not ruling out the influence of external stimuli on these groups Bradbury maintains that "any immigrants were linguistically absorbed and that such innovations as they brought were reinterpreted in the climate of the aboriginal culture." Thus oral traditions which derive these groups from outside Nigeria could be said to be historically inaccurate.

The study of loan words in language groups by linguists has also helped to improve our knowledge of culture change and contact in the past. The value of linguistic evidence is that it belongs to that category of data which has been called 'unconscious evidence' which unlike oral traditions is not subject to alterations (D.F. McCall, 1969, p.64).

Oral traditions have also been found exceedingly useful in this study. It is well known that many traditions are interested in migration; in such cases, except where the reasons for movement are stated, attempts are made to explain the developments that generated dispersal, (For example population pressure, wars, natural disasters or epidemic diseases could impel people to move to a less hostile environment. Often times economic pursuits like hunting, fishing, and trading are said to account for such movements. In general it is logical to imagine that all things being equal the direction of migration should be from areas of high population density to sparsely populated areas, especially when most of the people subsist through agriculture.

In analysing the traditions of migrations an attempt has been made to identify whether they refer to the large scale peopling of an area or to the movement of a particular ruling clan. The former through the aid of

linguistic classification is easier to establish. But in some societies there exist a variety of traditions of origin for the royal clan which pose formidable problems for the historian. For example the Igala possess traditions which trace the origin of the royal clan variously to Yorubaland, Benin, the Jukun kingdom, and straight from the sky. Faced with the difficulty of establishing which of these tradition is historically accurate some writers have tended to select one version and attempt to justify their choice. For the argument in favour of Benin origin for the Igala dynasty see G.J. Mott, "The Connections of the Atas of Igala with the Obas of Benin" enclosed in N.A.K. S.N.P. 17: K.2445 "Anthropological and Historical Note on the Igala Peoples" by K. Officer, 1923; Others have argued that such traditions may refer to phases in Igala history when Yoruba, Benin, and Jukun influences enjoyed prominence in Igala affairs. For the argument in favour of Jukun origin see M. Clifford, 1936, pp. 393-404 and J.S. Boston, 1962. By examining these traditions and comparing them with related traditions where these are available a sequence could be established for such contacts. Linguistic evidence makes Igala connection with the Yoruba the oldest of the contacts and the Igala tradition that derives the first Ata from an old Yoruba kingdom in the Niger-Benue Confluence region cannot be lightly discountenanced. This is because Yoruba influence radiating from Old Oyo was supposed to have been strong in this area and to provide the most likely explanation for the "Tsoede Bronzes" in Nupe country (T. Shaw, 1973). Benin and Igala traditions both tell of an early sixteenth century war between them, while the Jukun prince Ayagba in the Igala kinglist belongs to the late seventeenth century. (A.F.C. Ryder, 1969).

Kinglists in societies with monarchical institutions are valuable in establishing a relative chronology for the major developments between groups. This process could be facilitated in cases where certain traditions are associated with particular rulers whose reign could be dated. The technique sometimes adopted by historians for fixing the periods of reign for each king in a list is to find the average length of reign for those rulers whose periods of reign are well-known and from it extrapolate the length of reign for the other rulers.

However, dates obtained through the association of events with particular monarchs are not always incontrovertible. The Ezechima traditions which state that Onitsha was founded in the reign of Oba Esigie (c. 1504 to c.1550 A.D.) is not borne out by dates worked out from the Onitsha Kinglist. According to W.B. Baikie, Obi Udogwu was the king of Onitsha at the time of the Laird and Lander voyage in 1832. (W.B. Baikie, 1856, p.e 297). From the Onitsha kinglist, Udogwu was the thirteenth Obi and belonged to the sixth generation. By using thirty years as the mean length of a generation the date of foundation of Onitsha works out at c. 1650 A.D., about a hundred years away from Esigie's reign, (R.W. Harding, 1963, p.15-18; I. Nzimiro, 1972).

Oral traditions when closely analysed provide an insight into the pattern of interaction between groups when the stimuli for such relationships were mainly internal. In short they constitute a major source for the reconstruction of the beginning of contact between peoples. The main task in such a reconstruction has been to provide logical explanations for the pattern of relationships as delineated by the traditions. In this study this has entailed a close scrutiny of the traditions from both societies in the light of available evidence from other disciplines.

### Other sources of evidence

One determinant of early contact between peoples would have been the ecological differentiation of their places of habitation. A classic example of this can be found between the Niger Delta inhabitants and their inland neighbours. The former have in recent times regularly exchanged salt and fish for bulk foodstuff like yam, plantain and maize. Other regions possessed useful minerals like iron ore, which they exploited, or salt deposits that serve as sources of supply over a wide area.

Again some societies possessed religious centres whose influence extended beyond the confines of their particular political groups. The town of Ile-Ife, regarded by the Yoruba as their place of creation, is one such centre.

Like Ile Ife, the Igbo town of Agukwu-Nri was an early centre of ritual influence over a large area. Many towns and villages in northern Igboland both to the east and to the west of the river Niger have traditions which state that their founders came from the Nri community. Indeed, in some of these towns it is asserted that their first rulers were emigrants from Nri, a situation that is strikingly similar to the Ife traditions in Yorubaland. Also within Igboland was the Ibini Ukpabi oracle of Arochukwu which exerted influence over an extensive area, performing a supra-ethnic judicial function. It attracted pilgrims and litigants from the Efik and Ibibio as well as the Ijo-speaking population to the south. N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/29017 "Intelligence Report on the Aro Clan, Calabar Province" (1933), by T.M. Shankland, pp. 12-14, and Appendix IV. (S. Ottenberg, 1958, p. 297-301; G. I. Jones, 1963, p.15.

However with the rise of new centres of power based on wealth and militarism, the prominence of the early religious centres diminished and the territorial extent of their influence contracted. This was the case with the Old Oyo and Benin kingdoms.

Within the Nri sphere of influence a similar pattern of events was noticeable. From the west came Benin military incursions contributing to the decline of Nri influence in the West Niger Igbo area. The various Igbo communities were subjected to tributary relationship with Benin and derived their political titles and regalia from that direction. From the north-west the Igala capital of Idah having attained cultural prominence in the Niger-Benue Confluence region began to exert a pull on the Igbo towns and villages in the Nsukka borderland where Nri influence was supreme. Title aspirants from this area undertook journeys to the Ata's Court to receive their insignia of office. And from the Igala town of Ogorugu military expeditions were mounted into parts of Igboland which further contributed to the decline of Nri influence in the area. Also the Arochukwu oracle through its allies spread its tentacles within the heartland of Nri sphere of influence, contributing immensely to the eclipse of this ritual centre in Igboland.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE IGBO AND THE IGALA PEOPLES

#### THE IGBO:

The Igbo group of people today inhabit a stretch of territory lying between latitude 5° and 7° north and longitude 6° and 8° east. (Fig. 1). This area is bounded on the north by the Igala, Idoma and Ogoja peoples, on the east by the Ibibio, on the south by the Ijo. and on the west by the Edo. It covers an area of 40,922 square kilometres with a total population 'in 1963' of 9,246,413. The bulk of the Igbo population are located in Anambra and Imo States, but form the second largest ethnic group after the Edo in Bendel State, and are also found in substantial numbers in the River State. (V.C. Uchendu, 1961). It should be noted that outside their homeland the Igbo are found today all over Nigeria. Igboland is split into two unequal parts by the river Niger with the greater portion lying to the east of the river. The eastern portion is a plateau which rises gradually to the northern highlands which consist of two north-south ridges. Apart from the Niger, the major rivers are the Imo, Orashi, and Anambra to the east, and the Ase to the west.

Until fairly recent times the Igbo had no common name and individual village groups were generally known by the names of their ancestral founders. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950, p.5). The word 'Igbo' itself was used as a term of contempt by the riverain Igbo to refer to their hinterland kinsmen. Jeffreys suggested that the word 'Igbo' originally meant "people of the bush or forest and later ... acquired the derived, or secondary meaning of serf". (M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1956, p. 127). The semantics of some Igbo names led another writer to conclude that the word 'Igbo' means "the community of people". (M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1972, p.39). In modern times 'Igbo' is used to refer to Igbo territory, to Igbo-speaking people, and to their language.

The Igbo categorise their territory as three sections based on geographical location and environmental conditions. To the east the land between the Niger and Imo rivers is called Anaocha, a name which refers to the dry and infertile nature of its soil. The territory west of the Niger is called Enu-ani, 'the fertile highland', while the land close to and on both sides of the Niger is called Olu, the low-lying, fertile riverain section. These are broad distinctions, for there are sub-categorisations within these major groupings. See for example M.D.W. Jeffreys, (1934 Appendix 1). Modern ethnographers have classified the Igbo into five main groups based on territorial location and general cultural similarity; the northern or Onitsha Igbo, the Southern or Owerri Igbo, the western Igbo, the eastern or Cross River Igbo and the north-eastern Igbo. D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950, p.10). Although the Niger divides Igbo territory it has not been a barrier, and the two sections have retained their linguistic and cultural unity. Oral traditions among the western Igbo communities show that the migration pattern has in the main been from the east to the west with occasional movements in the opposite direction.

There is no common tradition of origin among the Igbo people, consequently scholars have employed the linguistic classification of Igbo language among the Kwa sub-family of the Niger-Congo group to explain their historical origin. Thus it has been argued that from the concentration of Kwa group of languages in the Niger-Benue confluence region, that region constitutes the most likely homeland of the members of this group including the Igbo. It should be noted, however, that heavy concentration may not always correspond with a group's origin centre. Thus other evidence such as the peoples traditions and other cultural traits would be valuable indicators (E. Isichei, 1976, p. 3). Armstrong (1973, p. 10-13) gives between 4,000 and 6,000 years the period when Igbo language separated from the other members of the Kwa sub-family. If true this would mean that the Igbo existed as a distinct ethnic group in Nigeria at least for this time. Relevant archaeological evidence in Igboland will be discussed in Part 2.

Having left the Niger-Benue Confluence the bulk of the Igbo population seem to have settled on the belt of land which later became the Owerri, Awka, Orlu, and Okigwe divisions of Northern Igboland. This theory is based on a number of arguments of which the first is that the Igbo inhabitants of this area lack traditions of migration from elsewhere; most of the communities in it lay claim to being the original inhabitants of their locality, generally deriving their ancestors from the sky or saying that they emerged from the ground. Also field investigators in northern Igboland have been struck by the genealogical depth of many of the families as compared to the relative shallowness of those from other parts of Igboland and by the oral traditions of other parts of Igboland which point to Northern Igboland, especially the Onitsha-Awka and Orlu areas, as their place of origin (A.G. Leonard, 1906, pp. 11-47; G.I. Jonas, 1963, p. 30).

Ecological considerations are a second reason for asserting that northern Igboland was a dispersal point for the Igbo population. Igboland is located in the rainforest belt, but due to prolonged farming, the original vegetation has been greatly modified to that of "palm studded secondary scrub, savannah, and grassland". (P.A. Allison, 1962, p. 241 - 249). The Igbo farming practice of leaving extensive tracts of exhausted farmlands fallow for a number of years to regenerate, has encouraged systematic encroachment into the rain forest in search of virgin land. In Igboland it is in the northern area that vegetational change has been most remarkable, and it belongs to the over-farmed land, in which forest trees have been largely eliminated and only oil palms are preserved.

Demographic data also appears to confirm the contention that the northern area was an early centre of settlement for the Igbo people. Most parts of the basin carry a substantial population, but the heaviest population densities are in northern Igboland where they usually exceed seven hundred per square mile; in parts of Orlu, Owerri and Awka figures of one thousand per square mile have been recorded. (D. Ford and G.I. Jones, 1950. p. 12-13; K.M. Buchanon and J.C. Pugh, 1969. p. 60).

### Oral Traditions:

Oral traditions of many Igbo communities affirm that it was from northern Igboland that Igbo population dispersed in various directions. Jones by examining such traditions of origin, has delineated the pattern of migration. There was an early movement to the Nsukka-Udi highlands in the

east and into the Ikwerre, Etche, Asa, and Ndokki areas in the south. A later movement took place to the Eastern Isuama area and from the Eastern Isuama area there were subsidiary migrations, one of which went south-south-east to form the Ngwa group, and another to the east into Umuahia area and from there to the Ohaffia-Arochukwu ridge. From the ridge a movement northwards formed the North-Eastern Igbo group. There were also movements from the Awka region westwards across the Niger to form the Western Igbo group (G.I. Jones 1963, p30-31).

In addition to this pattern of Igbo population dispersal the region received immigrants from their western and northern neighbours. The best known of these migrations were those from the Edo kingdom of Benin, and these have been very well documented by late nineteenth and early twentieth century European ethnographers. (A.G. Leonard 1906, p.35-6; N.W. Thomas, 1914, p2-8, P.A. Talbot, 1926, vol.2 p.168-9). There are two sets of traditions about Benin Migrations into Igboland; the first makes a straightforward claim to an ancestral home in Benin, while the second belonging to the Ezechima tradition, appears to be an Igbo tradition brought by refugees fleeing from Benin attacks, rather than by Benin elements. The latter are concentrated west of the Niger, and on the Niger river banks. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950 p.45-57). Another set of traditions deals with migrations from Igboland's northern neighbour, the Igala kingdom. Some riverain Igbo towns as well as many communities in the Nsukka area trace their origin to Idah, the Igala capital and are examined in detail in chapter III.

Apart from the Benin and Igala kingdoms, Igboland also received small accessions from other neighbours. For example the village group of Odiani in the West Niger Igbo area was founded by emigrants from Yorubaland and Ishan (D. Forde & G.I. Jones, 1950 p.46). While to the southeast the population of Arochukwu, a famous ritual and commercial centre, was of diverse origin being composed of Igbo, Ibibio, and Akpa elements. (T.M. Shankland, 1933, p. 8-18, P.A. Talbot 1926, vol.2 p.182-3).

### Agriculture

The primary occupation of the Igbo people is agriculture and the extent to which the original rain forest vegetation of the region has been replaced by the derived savannah, attests to the long term practice of this occupation. The standard farming implements until recently have been short-bladed hoes, matchets, and diggers, in the north-eastern area of the territory a special type of hoe (ogu uku) with a large semi-circular blade measuring 30 cms or more in diameter is used and 'big hoe' is the name which ethnographers have given the inhabitants of the area. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950 p.57-60). Most Igbo communities practise 'shifting cultivation', a system by which a tract of land after a period of cultivation is left fallow for a number of years to regain its fertility. They plant today a variety of root and rhizomes crops, such as yams, cocoyams, and cassava. Maize, plantains, melons and pumpkins are also cultivated as subsidiary crops. Among the Igbo the yam is regarded as the king of crops and as such it occupies a prominent place in the social and economic life of the people. The yam spirit Ifejoku is widely venerated, (V.C. Uchendu, 1965, 98-100), to ensure an abundant harvest and there are also great yam festivals and titles of honour connected with yam growing. Research has shown that some varieties of yam are indigenous to the region (D. Coursey, 1967 p.8-10). Cassava on the other hand spread into the region

through the Niger delta, being introduced by the Portuguese. (E.J. Alagoa, 1971, vol. 1 p.294).

The farming cycle begins in January and February each year with the clearing of the bush by the men and the collection of poles for staking yams. Actual planting begins in late March or early April with the first rains. The men prepare mounds, plant fragments of yam and train the yam vines. Following the planting of yams, the women, today cultivate such crops as maize, melons, pumpkins, cocoyams, and cassava in between the yam mounds. This system of intercropping helps to check erosion, and also provides the food supply before the harvest. The yams are harvested in October and stored in barns called oba. The vines are left undisturbed and this results in a secondary growth of the small tubers which are used during the next planting season. In some areas yam production was also for prestige purposes, and successful farmers could take the yam titles called eza ji. (C.K. Meek, 1937, 15-17; V.C. Uchendu, 1965 p. 24-26).

Next to yams in importance are palm oil and palm kernels which are also produced in large quantities. The palm fruits are harvested by the men, while the women and children are responsible for their collection and processing. Two types of palm oil are produced depending on the method employed, namely, the 'soft' and the 'hard' varieties. To produce the soft oil, palm nuts are boiled until they are tender and then pounded in huge mortars. The fibres are then separated from the nuts and pressed for the oil which is collected in gourds. For the hard oil, the unboiled palm nuts are pounded and the fibre mixed with water. The oil rises to the surface and is skimmed off and boiled before storage. The 'soft' oil is generally preferred for consumption because it last longer while the 'hard' variety is mainly for export. The palm nuts are later cracked to extract palm kernels which are used for the manufacture of a pomade, of which a large quantity are exported. Igbo men also tap the sap of the oil palm tree which is consumed as a fermented liquor and there have emerged a professional group of tappers who depend to a great extent on the sale of palm wine for their livelihood.

Owing to the importance of agriculture, land plays a key role in the life of the Igbo. The earth spirit (ani, ala) is the most prominent deity in most Igbo communities and almost every town has its own earth deity in whose name laws are made and oaths sworn, thus providing the ritual and political focus for the community. Certain conducts such as Homicide, kidnapping, suicide, and yam stealing are regarded as offences against ani and have to be ritually cleansed to avert disaster to the community in the form of bad harvest and famine or premature deaths. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950 pp.25-26). The availability of agricultural land has also largely determined the settlement patterns. Most Igbo villages are made up of homesteads clustered around a centrally located market place with farmland at their backs. This pattern of residence provides enough land for subsequent habitation and farming by an increasing population, and thus curtail friction among neighbouring communities arising from encroachment on territorial rights. (R.N.Henderson, 1972 p.160-5; G.I. Jones, 1961 p. 125. C.K. Meek, 1937, p.18).

Apart from agriculture the Igbo also possessed specialised craft industries. Prominent among these was iron working which supplied farming implements, household utensils, and weapons. The most famous smithing centres were Awka, Abiriba, and Nkwerre and the Awka in particular were itinerant smiths who divided the region into occupational zones which were

served by specific quarters in that town. They used iron which was smelted by the Agbaja people of the Udi highlands. (N.W. Thomas 1913, p.13). The Abiriba and Nkwerre smiths obtained their iron from the Okigwe-Arochuku ridge (E. Isichei, 1956 p.29-30). Nowadays, the smiths make use of imported scrap metals as their raw material. The Igbo were also noted for their great skill in wood carving; they produced carved doors, wooden stools, mortars and pestles, ladles, and beautiful masks for religious festivals. Textile manufacture has also been an important and widely practised craft in Igboland; it was largely in the hands of women to whom it was a leisure occupation. They obtained their raw material from locally grown cotton and today import a substantial quantity from their northern neighbours the Igala and the Idoma. The Nsukka Igbo as well as the southern Igbo town of Akwete are notable centres of textile production. (A.E. Afigbo, 1973, p.82-3).

Another major source of livelihood for the Igbo has been trading, which in the past was regarded as a subsidiary occupation to farming. Most Igbo village groups have markets which are held once in the four-day or eight-day week. With the advent of colonial rule and urbanisation two types of markets can now be distinguished based on location and periodicity. These are the urban markets which are held daily except on Sundays, and the rural markets that operate according to the traditional market cycle. In general there are two types of trade; the local trade in which commodities for domestic needs are exchanged, and which is dominated by women, and the long distance trade within and outside Igboland which is predominantly in the hands of men and requires a substantial capital for the purchase and transportation of the goods. (U.I. Ukwu, 1967; V.C. Uchendu, 1965 p.29-30). The latter dealt in goods like horses, glass beads, ivory, and in former times slaves.

In their political organisation the Igbo were never unified into a single state structure but remained essentially a segmentary society. The largest political unit was the village group (township) called Obodo, ala, or mba. This was comprised of a number of contiguous villages which believed that they were the collective descendants of a common ancestor. In most cases these villages were ranked in an order of seniority, the most senior being regarded as the descendants of the first son of the founder while the most junior were believed to be the offsprings of the most junior son. Besides this territorial unity and ancestral origin, the unity of a village-group is also based on its possession of common customs, and a shrine to the earth deity where sacrifices are made for the welfare of the community. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1980 p.15-6; C.K. Meek, 1937 p.88-91; A.E. Afigbo, 1973, p.16-58. A common feature of many Igbo village-groups is the territorial dual organisation by which the villages are divided into an 'upper' and 'lower' sections. Sometimes the division is based on geographical location e.g. Ndi Elugwu (the people of the hill top) and Ndi Agbo (the people of the valley); in other cases it is based on seniority, and the senior group is called Ikenga and the junior one Ihitte. (G.I. Jones 1949; A.E. Afigbo, 1973 p.18). Each village is made up of a number of lineages believed to be the descendants of the sons of its founder. As in the case of the village-group the lineages are ranked in order of seniority.

There are two types of organisation in the Igbo system of government. The first is the direct democracy which operates up to the village level, while the second is the representative democracy which is found at the village-group level. At the lineage level, the oldest man in the unit

(Okpara) is the focus of ritual and political authority. He takes charge of the ofo, the symbols of justice and authority, and offers sacrifices to the ancestors for the welfare of his kinsmen. For these services he is accorded respect and receives occasional gifts from members of the lineage. A serious dispute, however, was settled by an assembly of all the adult men of the unit, and the women when the issue concerned the latter. Everyone was qualified to contribute to the discussions, at the end of which some elders were selected for Judgement; their decision was then announced to the assembly for approval. If the decision was acceptable it was approved, otherwise it was reconsidered until there was a general agreement.

Government at the village level is in the hands of the village assembly composed of all the male adults. However, this assembly has as its core an inner council (ama ala) made up of lineage heads, title holders, and other wise and respected elders. Public matters are openly discussed, every member being free to make a contribution, and the end of the debate, the ama ala withdraws for consultation (izuzu). After that a spokesman who is an orator of repute announces the decision. If it is accepted by the assembly that is the end of the matter, otherwise the process is repeated until there is a general consensus.

While government at the village level is based on direct democracy, that of the village-group involves the representative principle. The village-group assembly is composed of representatives from the component villages. The representatives include lineage heads, title holders, and respected elders. They do not form a permanent body but are selected as the need arises. The procedure for arriving at decisions is similar to that of the village assembly. The decisions taken at these meetings are enforced by the 'age-grade', and 'secret' societies of each village. Decisions cannot be implemented by such agencies from another village, thus underscoring the autonomy of each village. The system has been called "the village republic" by ethnographers. (V.C. Uchendu, 1965, pp.39-44; A.E. Afigbo, 1973, pp. 18-20; C.K. Meek, 1937, pp. 88-165.)

An important feature of Igbo social organisation is the age grade system (otu, ogbo). Age-grades are organised on village basis and are composed of age-companies which are formed triennially among boys aged thirteen to fifteen years. Members of a particular age-company elect their leader and choose a name to form an age-grade association. As the boys grow to manhood their companies are periodically upgraded through successive age-grades until they reach the ranks of the elders which the highest age-grade. In some towns the transition from one stage to another takes place at intervals of six years while in others it could be less. (C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of the Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province", phs. 183-5; J.C. Anene, 1966 p.13).

There are no standard names for these age-grades but a specific example could illustrate their functions in the society. In the Anam village-group located in the Anambra River basin, there are four age-grades. The most junior, Isiagana, and is made up of boys between thirteen and eighteen years old. The next, Ikolobia, consists of young men between the ages of nineteen and thirty-three years. These two age-grades form the labour corps and are responsible for cleaning the path and building bridges and markets. During these engagements they are supervised by the next age-grade, Otu Owanano, made up of men between thirty-four and forty seven years old. This group also serves as messengers and executive agents for the implementation of decisions taken at the village or village-group

assemblies. The other two age-grades are Otu Mkpokulo, for men between forty-nine and fifty-four years old, and Ikenyi, for men of fifty-five years and above. These age grades are in charge of the legislative and judicial aspects of the village life. If there was an important issue before the village assembly, the Otu Mkpokulo was expected to carry out investigations and report back to the Ikenyi for a decision. It is also from the Otu Owanuno and Otu Mkpokulo that the warriors were selected. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/29576 "Intelligence Report on the Anam Villages, Onitsha Division, Onitsha Province" (1934) by B.G. Stone, pp. 7-11. Each age-grade is sensitive about its prestige and checks misbehaviour through the imposition of fines or expulsion of deviant members. The institution was thus a means for upholding the societal norms and maintaining stability.

In addition to age-grades the Igbo also have well-developed title societies called Ndi Nze or Ndi Ozo. The essential qualifications for admission to these societies are free birth, ability to pay the fees, and an upright character. The titles whose names vary from one village-group to another, are generally graded in an ascending order of prestige, privilege, and ritual status, and are expected to be taken in that order, beginning from the lowest. In Aguleri, for example, there are seven titles, namely, Amanwulu, Ifejoku, Ich, Ekwu, Asamo, Oba, and Ogbuanyinya. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/28323 "Intelligence Report on Umueri Village, Awka and Onitsha Divisions, Onitsha Province" (1932) by B.G. Stone, pp. 12-15). The first three titles are taken at the lineage level and did not confer any privilege outside it. The last four titles are taken at the village-group level and are more expensive and prestigious. Membership of the upper echelons of the societies enables one to participate in the decision making processes of the community. Again every titled man is entitled to a share of the fees paid by new members. In this way the associations serve as mutual insurance societies for the investment of wealth to ensure some measure of security and prestige during old age. Like the age-grades the title societies exercise a form of social control by insisting on strict codes of conduct for their members and in this way promote peace in the community. In northern Igboland ozo title holders are widely respected and the society thus fosters a pan-Igbo consciousness. (C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of the Nsukka Division...", pps. 170-182; V.C. Uchendu, 1965, pp. 82-83; D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950, pp. 19-20.

Owing to influence from their neighbours the political system of some Igbo groups on the periphery of Igbo territory shows some differences from the basic type. This has largely entailed a combination of the 'typical' political system with special features borrowed from their neighbours. For example the West Niger Igbo communities, some parts of Northeast Igboland, and the towns along the Niger, which had contact with the Benin and Igala kingdoms possess centralized political institutions. Here there are kings titled officials who assist him in the administration; the titled offices are in most cases the privileges of certain lineages and are not open to every citizen. Some of the officials are in charge of the administration of specific territorial units on behalf of the king and act as vital links between the king and the lineage heads and his subjects. The king and his officials constitute a council which formulated policies that were presented to the village-group assembly for approval. Thus they fulfil the role of the ama ala, the difference being that while the king's council is a permanent body, the ama ala is normally selected ad hoc. These Igbo kings (eze), wear regalia and maintain courts like their Benin and Igala counterparts although they are not as politically powerful (C.K. Meek, pp. 185-196; V.C. Uchendu, 1965, pp.44-45; D. Forde and G.I. Jones 1950, pp.

35-37, 46-48). A good example of this presidential monarchy system is found in Onitsha. The king of the town bears the title obi. Next to him in rank are three grades of titled officials (Ndichie) appointed by the king from Ozo title holders, namely, Ndichie Ume, Ndichie Okwa, and Ndichie Okwareze. The first grade of officials Ndichie Ume are six in number and bear the titles Iyase, Ajie, Odu, Onya, Ogene, and Owelle. They are the heads of the six administrative units of the town, and also the war leaders. The second grade of officials, Ndichie Okwa are about twenty-two in number. They assist the Ndichie Ume in carrying out their civil and military functions in the subdivisions of the administrative units. The third grade of officials Ndichie Okwareze numbering about twenty-three, are the king's principal attendants. They decorate the palace during festivals, take charge of the king's regalia, and supervise sacrifices for the welfare of the town. They also assist the Ndichie Ume in the maintenance of law and order in their respective administrative units. The Ndichie are thus the main intermediaries of the Obi in his relations with the people, and the rest of the people to their monarch (I. Nzimiro 1972 p.41-56, 100-106).

Among the northeastern Igbo groups of Abakaliki and Afikpo there was also close contact with non-Igbo groups living near the Cross River where age sets played active roles in government. As a result these Igbo groups evolved a political system in which the focus of authority was the senior age set (Ndi Uke) which was ritually installed at an elaborate ceremony. They and the lineage heads constitute the deliberative body similar to the ama ala. Their decisions were enforced at the village level by another age set that was also specially installed as the executive arm of government. (D. Forde, and G.I. Jones, p.59; G.I. Jones, 1961 pp. 117-134.

The southern Igbo groups of Chuhu and Ngwa, as well as the southeastern Igbo of Arochukwu and Abam, because of their interaction with their Ibibio neighbours, developed the institution of 'secret' societies. Among the Ibibio, the Ewkpe and Ekpo societies hold the executive authority and every wealthy freeborn citizen is a member of one of them. The Igbo versions of these societies included the Ekpe, Okonko, and Akang which are also open to every freeborn citizen who can pay the fees. Decisions reached at the village group assembly were implemented at the village level by these societies. They collected fines, adjudicated disputes, and kept the peace. (D. Forde, and G.I. Jones, 1950 pp.20, 42-44; T.M. Shankland 1933, pp. 28-30.)

Justice among the Igbo is regarded as an aspect of government and there is no separation of powers between the legislative, the executive, and the judicial arms. The same village assembly, and its equivalent in title and age grade associations, enact the laws and also interpret and execute them. Depending on the nature of the offence committed and the parties involved, trials could be held by the lineage, village, village-group, title-association or age-grade assemblies. There is no rigid division between civil and criminal offences, rather a distinction between conduct which is regarded as abomination (nso, alu) and those which are not; homicide, incest, yam stealing for example, belong to the first category and are guarded as crimes capable of polluting the community. This means that even after the culprits have been punished their crimes still have to be ritually cleansed to avert disaster. When the evidence against a suspect is not convincing, he is made to swear an oath to prove his innocence; at other times intractable cases were taken to oracles for solution. The oracles, served as the final courts of appeal and were regarded as impartial arbitrators. (V.C. Uchendu, 1965 pp. 42-43; D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950

op.cit. pp. 20-21; C.K. Meek, 1937 pp. 206-251).

Finally, it is worthwhile mentioning the Igbo concept of a political community. To the Igbo a political community is a union of the living, the dead, and the gods of the land. This means that communal laws are regarded as having been ordained by the ancestral founders of the community and the gods. It is believed that breathing of the laws even in secret would be punished by these unseen agents. In this way the frequency of anti-social behaviour is substantially reduced, and this would help to explain the rudimentary nature of the executive arm of government in Igboland.

### The Igala

To the north of the Igbo the Igala inhabit a triangular region located in the Niger-Benue River Confluence (Fig. 1). They are bounded to the north by the Benue river, to the west by the Niger, to the east by the Idoma group and to the south by the Igbo group. The Igala country lies approximately between latitude 6 30' and 8 north and longitude 6 30' and 7 40' east and covers an area of about 12,740 square kilometres. Its population in 1963 was 684,880. This gives an average density of fifty-four persons per square kilometre, and makes Igala country a sparsely populated area. (J.S. Boston 1968 p.4) The population is distributed evenly throughout the region with concentrations around Idah on the Niger and Ankpa in the northeast. The bulk of Igala population live in present day Benue State, but some of them are also found in Anambra and Bendel States.

The region lies in a transitional vegetation area between the forest to the south and the dry open savannah to the north. The average annual rainfall is fifty inches throughout the territory. To the south-west, between the Niger and Anambra rivers in the Ibaji district, the vegetation is different, consisting of swamp forest but the alluvial deposits from the two rivers make this the most fertile portion of the country. (R.G. Armstrong, 1955 p.78). Apart from the Niger and Benue rivers, the other principal waterways are the Ofu and Okura which flow southwards into the Anambra, a tributary of the Niger. To the north, Onukpo and Amara river flow into the Benue.

According to linguists the Igala language is closely related to the Yoruba language from which it diverged about 2,000 years ago. (R.G. Armstrong, 1967, p.13). From this linguistic affinity it could be inferred that, apart from some immigrant clans, the Igala represent an extension of Yoruba population eastwards across the river Niger, who have been in their present location for a very long time. From the date suggested by linguists it seems that the arrival of the Igala in their locality was subsequent to the movement of Igbo population southwards from the Niger-Benue Confluence region. This conclusion is based on the present location of the Yoruba, the Igala, and the Igbo, as well as the separation periods given by linguists for the three languages. If the Yoruba and the Igbo lived apart for about 4,000-6,000 years, and the Igala separated from the Yoruba about 2,000 years ago, it could be inferred that the Igala arrived in their present homeland after the Igbo migration southwards from the Niger-Benue Confluence area. This population movement however would seem to have taken place before the southward migration of the Igbirra Okene who live west of the Niger and form a wedge between the Igala and the Yoruba. It has been suggested that the region was previously inhabited, by Idoma,

people who were mostly displaced and pushed further to the east, although some were absorbed by the Igala immigrants. (N.A.K.), S.N.P.. 17:K2013 "Ethnological Notes on the Tribes in Idah Division, Kabba Province" (1926), by Captain J. Noel Smith, p.2; S.N.P. 7:5315/1907 "Bassa Province-Okpota and Igara Tribes - Laws and Customs - Notes on" by F.N.W. Byng-Hall pp.2-3. On their arrival east of the Niger the Igala may have initially settled around Idah from where they subsequently dispersed in various directions, perhaps mainly due to increases in population. This migration pattern would partly explain the traditions of most Igala settlements which point to Idah as their ancestral home. It should also help to account for the later political and ritual significance of Idah in Igala history.

The northern part of Igala territory is today inhabited by two non-Igala groups who arrived in the area as refugees about the middle of nineteenth century. The cause of their disruption was the Fulani jihad in Hausaland which developed into systematic slave raids and conquests in the Niger-Benue valleys. Consequently, the Bassa Nge were forced to flee southwards from their home in Nupe country across the river Niger to Lokoja. Continued military pressure by the Fulani finally led to movement into the northwestern Igala territory in the 1840 (S.F. Nadel 1942, p.12). In the same way some of the Bassa Komo population, who speak a semi-Bantu language, were compelled to leave their home north of the Benue river to seek refuge in Igala country in the 1860s. The continued influx of Bassa Komo refugees into Igala territory generated conflict between them and their hosts. Aku Odiba, the Igala Ata at the time, despatched a military expedition to expel from the kingdom, but the attack was repulsed and an agreement was reached by which they recognised the Ata's authority in return for permission to reside in Igala land. (M. Clifford, 1936 p.404; R.G. Armstrong, 1968 p.77).

The multi-ethnic composition of the Igala kingdom is further reflected in the traditions of origin of some of the clans who unlike the Basa Nge and the Bassa Komo have been completely absorbed. For, example, the riverine clans of Abdkko, and Agaidko are of Igbira origin, while the Uchalla Angwa and Uliman Ata clans trace their ancestral home to Kano. The Achadu clan is of Igbo origin while the royal clan traces its descent (in different traditions) to Yorubaland, Benin, and Jukun kingdoms (M. Clifford, 1936, p.395. J.S. Boston, 1968, p. 16-21, 103k and 1962. The location of the kingdom in the Niger-Benue Confluence region largely accounts for its wide range of contacts with other Nigerian groups.

Like the Igbo the Igala are predominantly farmers but have an unusually rich environment. The location of the country in a transition zone has meant that both forest and savannah crops flourish. Thus the Igala produce such forest crops as yams, oil palms, cocoyam, maize, pumpkins, cassava, and such savannah crops as millet, guineacorn, bennised, and beans. Farming is carried out principally by the men who clear the bush, till the soil, and plant the crops. The main farming tool is the short-bladed hoe, while diggers and matchets are also employed. The farmers practise shifting cultivation. Oil Palm products are also collected from both the farmlands and uncultivated communal groves. The palm fruits are cut down by the men, while the women take charge of the collection and production of palm oil. The low population density in an extensive and fertile territory has significantly influenced settlement patterns. Owing to an abundance of rich and uninhabited stretches of land, Igala settlements generally tended to be widely dispersed and impermanent (J.S. Boston, 1968 p. 3-5; R.G. Armstrong, 1955 p.83).

Some Igala communities who live on the river banks engage in fishing and trade. The Ibaji district of Igala country for example specializes in fishing for its location on the Niger and Anambra floodplain, dotted with numerous pools and ponds, make this occupation rewarding. Most fishermen use nets, but some others employ vegetable poisons which are scattered over the stream to stupefy the fish before collection. Fishing would seem from Igbo and Igala traditions to have played a significant role in the early dispersal of Igala populations downstream where settlements were established by fishermen. Hunting is widely practised and made more rewarding by the large variety of game; among the big species common were elephant, buffalo, and antelope. Many villages are said to have been founded because of the abundance of certain types of game and as a result were named after such animals. For example Oju-Ocha, Obagu, and Gwolawo, took their names from the antelope, the monkey, and guineafowl respectively, (J.S. Boston, 1964, p.116, S.N.P. 10 16p/1921 "Munshi Province Okwoga Division Assessment Report" (1921), by N.J. Broke, p.11.

The Igala markets in the nineteenth century were renowned for the profusion of ivory sold in them. As in most specialised West Africa professions part of the hunting spoil was given to the Ata as a symbolic recognition of his political authority. The hunters use bows, iron-tipped and poisoned arrows, matchets, and lever guns. The prominence of this occupation is shown by the fact that two of the most important Igala festivals, namely ocho and ogaiganye, are organised around hunting.

There were also specialised craft industries among the Igala. Prominent among these was weaving in which the Igala excelled. The cloths were produced from cotton cultivated in large quantities particularly in the Ife district to the northeast of the kingdom. Igala cloth was of such high quality that it was more expensive than imported English textiles in the nineteenth century. (W. Allen and T.R.H. Thompson, 1848, vol. 1, p.322). Also celebrated as an adjunct to textile manufacture was the dyeing industry and early European explorers noted the numerous dyepits in Idah and Igala capital. The dye is produced from the leaves of the indigo plant, the leaves being pounded and the resulting paste smoke-dried. They are then mixed with the ashes from burnt plantern stems or pawpaw leaves shaped into balls and fired in an open kiln. The fired balls are then pounded in a mortar and the powder placed in a sieve over the dyepit. Water slowly poured on the powder is allowed to percolate into the pit until it is full. Camwood is occasionally used as a red dye. (N.A.K.), S.N.P. 17: 2445 "Anthropological and Historical Notes on the Igala Peoples" (1923) by Keith Officer, pp. 38-9; W.Allen and Thompson, T.R.H., 1848, Vol. I, pp. 322-3.)

Iron working was important in Igala country.. Traditionally the blacksmiths obtained their iron by themselves smelting iron ore which the Igala call ikpojo. (P.E. Okwoli, 1973, p.24). However, with the availability of European manufactured scrap metal from the coastal areas of Nigeria in the 19th century the smelting process was abandoned. Their products include farming tools, ornaments, and staffs of office for the nobility. Other crafts included tanning, wood carving, basket-work, pottery and matmaking. The leather industry produces bridles, necklaces, amulets, belts, whips, fly-fans, cushions, and sandals. The woodcarvers produce elaborately carved doors, stools, eating bowls, and walking sticks. Matmaking, basket work, and pottery are specialities of women.

Trading is also a major activity amongst the Igala. Most towns and villages have their own markets which are held once every four days, or in

the case of the bigger markets once every eight days. Local trade is dominated by the women and is mainly in domestic commodities such as foodstuff, pottery, waist-beads, and soap. Long distance trade in commodities such as horses, glass-beads, and textiles are controlled by the men. (R.G. Armstrong, 1955 p.83-5). The geographical location of the country on the Niger-Benue Confluence places it in a commercially advantageous position for the rivers Niger and Benue are important east-west commercial waterways while the overland routes to the north and the lower Niger to the south form the north-south trading axis. In this way the Igala are able to act as middlemen in the exchange of the savannah goods from the north and the forest products from the south.

The social and political organization of the Igala are based on two interwoven systems, namely, the clan organization and the territorial community. Each clan is composed of lineages, and the lineages in turn are made up of sub-lineages. Igala clans are not localised in a particular area but are dispersed over wide areas with occasional concentrations in certain places, clans also have names which in most cases correspond to the political titles associated with them. Clans vary greatly in size and scale; while some have memberships of hundreds, the Achadu and the royal clans have thousands of members. Every clan has a head who is normally the oldest male member and is called oguj olopu. He takes charge of the clan's ancestral cult and mediates between the living and dead members of the clan. Sometimes a clan may have a title holder appointed clan head by the Ata or the Achadu. In such situations while the oguj olopu retained his traditional functions, the titled holder mediated in the relationship between the central authorities and the clan. (J.S. Boston, 1967, pp. 18-19; (N.A.K.), S.N.P. 7: 5315/1907 pp. 3-4).

The Igala are also organised in territorial units aja, the basic residential unit being the hamlet. This consists of a cluster of homesteads and is a self-contained community which is sufficiently isolated from other hamlets to be regarded as a political unit. In most cases the hamlet is a kinship community whose members are related to one another by birth or by marriage. Each hamlet has a recognised head who settles disputes among its residents. A group of hamlets with common farmlands, water sources and pathways make up a village, (ewo). The head of the most senior hamlet is the village head, and is known as onu ewo, (chief of the village), or onu oja, (chief of the group). He mediates between the village and the head of the district in which the village is located, collects tribute which is sent to the district head, and maintains law and order. However, the real administrative authority rests with the heads of the hamlets, and any interference by the village head in this sphere is regarded as oppression. Such a situation could result in the desertion of the village through migration, a development which to the Igala, is an index of the failure of the administrative head. (J.S. Boston, 1968, pp. 128-150).

A number of villages constitute a district which (J.S. Boston, 1968, pp.150-1, in the traditional political system covered an area of about 52 sq. kms. These districts have been merged to form larger units in the modern political system. However, most of them retain their identity and functions as subdivisions of the modern districts called "village areas". The head of a district is called onu ane, (chief of the land), and the office is hereditary within a clan whose members are the descendants of the first settlers in the area. The onu ane is not only the administrative authority of the district but also the ritual head. A group of districts

constitute a province which is normally under the control of the head of a royal sub-clan resident in the area. The Provincial Head wields all judicial and administrative powers over his area except in cases of homicide which have to be referred to the royal court at Idah.

Like the Yoruba, the Igala have a centralized political system with a king (Ata) at the head. He is assisted in the administration of the kingdom by state officials whose political titles are largely hereditary within their clans. In general political offices in the kingdom could be grouped into two classes, namely, those at the central government level, and those at the local government level. At the central government level there are two groups of titles which are for the royal clan and the non-royal clans respectively. The royal titles in turn could be split into two categories, one group belonging to the ruling house at Idah, others which are held by the royal sub-clans resident in the provinces. The ruling house at Idah has about eighteen hereditary titles including the kingship and all the posts of chief councillor. These titles are hereditary within the sub-clans and rotate through the four lineages of Amacho, Itodo Aduga, Akogu, and Ocholi. Most of the title holders have specific areas of the kingdom under their care. From these areas they collect tributes, part of which is sent to the king and part they retain as their remuneration. As with the ruling house at Idah, the provincial royal sub-clans have their own titles which rotate amongst the component lineages. Although the rulers of these sub-clans are appointed by the Ata from their members, they governed their province as semi-autonomous units. (J.S. Boston, 1967, p. 20-23).

The non-royal titles at the central government level are held by the 'kingmakers' and the town chiefs. The nine 'kingmakers' are the heads of a group of nine clans called Igala Mela who were the indigenous inhabitants of Idah before the immigration of the royal clan. The chief kingmaker bears the title of Achadu and is the political head of the Achadu clan. He is the next highest political official after the king. The 'kingmakers' are in charge of the selection and installation of a new king, and served as a counterpoise to royal autocracy. They are also in charge of the earth shrine, erane, at which the Ata made sacrifices for the welfare of the kingdom. The town chiefs are the heads of various clans who live mainly in the riverine districts of the kingdom. Their functions range from purely ritual duties to administrative roles including the control of trade on the river Niger, the provision of canoes for the king, and collection of tribute from the riverine villages. The town chiefs have no collective head similar to the Achadu, and are not as influential as the kingmakers in the political affairs of the kingdom.

There are also certain non-hereditary titles which are held by special categories of officials appointed by the Ata. The most important of these are those held by the eunuchs (amonoji). They are in charge of the palace buildings and serve as intermediaries between the district heads and the king, and judicial problems which could not be resolved in provinces were brought to the Ara through the eunuchs. Unlike the other royal officials who went out of office with the accession of a new king, the eunuchs remained in their positions within the palace, in this way they provided continuity in government and were the repositories of royal traditions and practices. One of the eunuchs, (Ogbe), deputised for the king in the administration of justice when he could not sit in the court. The eunuchs are the only groups of appointive title holders permitted by the Ata to award titles to their own followers, thus showing their importance in the state's administrative machinery. Another group of appointed title holders

were the palace retainers (edibo). They had sworn on oath of loyalty to the king and who rendered services to him in return for royal protection. Cases against an edibo could not be tried in the local courts but must be taken to the royal court at Idah. However, due to lack of a corporate organisation and leadership the edibo had no influence on the state policies. In former times there were also two slave titles which were not important in the government of the state. (J.S. Boston, 1967, pp.25-27; M. Clifford, 1936, pp. 400-403.

At the local government level, the king's commands are put into effect by the district heads (onu ane), who also ensure that the interest of their communities are known at the capital. The functions of the district head include the settling of disputes, collection of tributes, allocation of land, and offering of sacrifices to the local earth deity for the welfare of the community. A part of the tribute collected, was sent to the Ata through one of his councillors or eunuchs. The onu one receives his title and the insignia of his office, consisting of bead bracelets, from the Ata. The district is also regarded as a ritual community and it is believed that if the onu ane makes appropriate sacrifices at the earth shrine there would be prosperity in the land and disaster would be averted. The onu ane is also in charge of a special festival (abule), used as an agent of social control against evil practices such as witchcraft and sorcery considered as crimes against the earth deity and capable of bringing misfortune to the community. In this way the earth cult provides a ritual base for the political authority of the district head, and also fosters stability in provincial areas of the kingdom. (J.S. Boston, 1967 p.27-8; M. Clifford 1936, p.398).

Igala traditions affirm that the royal clan was immigrant but there is not consensus about the place of origin. Among the origins mentioned in the traditions are Yorubaland, the Benin, and the Jukun kingdom and there is also a tradition which states that the first Igala king came from the sky and landed on a rock at Idah. (N.A.K.) S.N.P., 17; K2445, p.2.

As was previously indicated, there are other immigrant clans in the Igala kingdom and it is, therefore, possible that the Igala were ruled by successive dynasties from neighbouring older kingdoms. It has been suggested by Horton that the traditions of foreign origin for the Igala dynasty may be a device for legitimization of royal authority which was widespread in centralised Nigerian societies. He wrote: 'One suspects that they are as mythical as the claims to a divine aura often made by the same rulers. It begins to look indeed, as though claims to 'outsider' status, whether divine or human or both, are, above all, means whereby rulers attempt to consolidate their positions in divided societies. (R. Horton, 1971, p. 116).

If the crucial point for legitimizing political authority was the 'outsider' status of the ruling clan, it might be that the place of origin could then be varied periodically.

As the political head of the kingdom the Ata awards most of the titles; his court at Idah is the highest judicial body in the state, and he is also its spiritual head. This is evident in his role as the priest of the royal ancestral cult which is one of the principal components of the state religion. In addition the Ata makes annual sacrifices at the national earth shrine, (erane).

### Common Igbo-Igala Features

There are overall, certain features common to the Igbo and the Igala. They both belong to the same Kwa language group and seem to have lived in their present locations for many centuries. Similar agriculture is practised and helps to explain the great importance of earth deities in both societies. They both also engage in similar trading, and craft industries. But while the Igala social and political organisation are based on a combination of the clan and territorial habitation, those of the Igbo revolve round localised lineages. Furthermore, the Igala have centralised political institutions while most Igbo communities remain essentially segmentary. Their geographical proximity have encouraged intensive contacts between them and the next chapter focuses attention on these contacts.

## CHAPTER 3

### IGBO-IGALA RELATIONS BEFORE C. A.D.1650

The mid 17th century has been chosen as a terminus for this chapter for two reasons. The first is that it was about this time that the Jukun royal clan arrived at Idah; this was significant because Igala traditions attribute to its leader Ayagba, the transformation of Igala society into a state. He is credited with the definition of the external and internal boundaries of the kingdom, and the creation of political institutions. (M. Clifford, 1936, p. 397; J.S. Boston, 1969, pp. 35-6). Secondly, it was about the same time that the River Niger began to be developed as a major commercial waterway due to the demands of the inter-continental slave trade; the Igala and the other lower Niger communities who benefited from this trade becoming increasingly influential. Trade routes existed both on, away from and along river valleys.

Some major avenues of communication between Niger-Benue Confluence and the Niger Delta must always have been the multiple overland routes parallel to the Nsukka-Udi highlands (Fig. 2). The savannah type vegetation of the Igo-Igala frontier zone (c. latitude 7 north) facilitated the movement and it may be assumed that there was then as later a maze of pathways linking the settlements through the low-lying Anambra river basin; these were usable only during the dry season. The overland routes were probably of greatest importance as channels for intercourse before the inception of the slave trade to the coast and the transformation of the waterways into major commercial arteries.

The other important channels for interaction were the rivers. The Niger with the tributaries the Benue and the Anambra traverses the whole region on its course southwards to the Atlantic ocean. The Anambra in particular rises deep in Igala country and flows southwards through Igboland into the Niger at Onitsha. These rivers must always have provided opportunities for the fishing and local commerce. Among the Igala those who engaged in riverain occupations were considered in the 19th century to be of Bassa, Gwari, and Igbirra extraction who became Igala by assimilation. They were called amamonya, (children of Onya), by their inward kinsmen and since Onya is a distant Igbo town in the Niger delta the name thus suggests the distances covered by canoemen and the southern origin of some of the riveraine settlers. In Igboland the Anam and Aguleri inhabitants of the Anambra river basin, and the Akiri-Igbo, the indigenous inhabitants of Aboh also practised riverain occupations but these Igbo communities unlike their Igala neighbours lacked a reputation as long-distance canoemen. However, with the rise of the Aboh kingdom in about 1650 A.D. there appeared an Igbo group which played a significant role in the development of commercial enterprise along the Niger. (K.O. Ogedengbe, 1971, p. 296). The rivers also sustained communication in the rainy season when the pathways through the low-lying Anambra river basin were flooded.

It is not possible to say when contact between the Igbo and the Igala was established through either of these routes. The ancient nature of such communications, however, is evident from both Igbo and Igala oral traditions. Among the Igbo groups which have traditions of early contact

with the Igala are the Umueri towns. This group of related towns situated to the north-east of Onitsha, trace their descent from an ancestral founder called Eri. Eri had four sons, namely Nri, Aguleri, Igbariam and Amanuke in that order of seniority, who founded the various towns bearing their names. These four towns are collectively known as Umueri (the children of Eri). Nri the eldest son of Eri gave birth to four sons called Agukwu, Ukabi, Osunagidi and Osuoba. Agukwu founded a settlement by that name (it is also known as Agukwu-Nri). Ukabi's two sons established Enugu-Ukwu and Nawfia, Osunagidi founded Enugwu-Agidi and the descendants of Osuoba are scattered in the various towns. These towns are collectively known as Umunri (the children of Nri) and constitute a sub-clan within the Umueri clan. The only daughter of Nri called Iguedo had four sons who founded Awkuzu, Umuleri, Nando and Ogbunike which together were known as Umuigwedo and also form a sub-clan of the Umueri group. The towns of Nteje, Nsugbe and Umunya are also associated with the Umueri group although their genealogical connection with Eri is not clear. (For information on the Umueri clan and its sub-groups see (1) N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/28323 "Intelligence Report on Umueri Villages, Awka and Onitsha Division, Onitsha Province" (1932 by B.G. Stone (2) N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/309886 "Intelligence Report on the Umunri Group, Awka Division, Onitsha Province" (1935), by H.J.S. Clark and P.P. Grey (3) N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/28280 "Intelligence Report on the Umuigwedo clan of Awka and Onitsha Divisions, Onitsha Province" (1932) by A.F.B. Bridges. This information was also given to me by Nri and Aguleri elders during my fieldwork in January, 1979).

According to the traditions of origin of the Umueri clan recorded at Agukwu-Nri by Jeffreys, Eri was sent together with his wife Namaku from the sky by Chukwu (God) land their four sons, founded the Umueri. Eri had a second wife whose son Idah, when Eri died emigrated and founded the town. The eldest son of Idah Onojo Ogboni grew up to become a giant and a great warrior. (M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1956, p. 119-131).

A different version of the Umueri clan's tradition of origin stated that Eri was an Igala war leader who together with his followers came to Aguleri on a military expedition. He established his camp at Eri-aka from where he raided the neighbouring Igbo towns taking many captives. These prisoners became so numerous that they absorbed their conquerors who thus lost their Igala language. Eri married Nono who gave birth to six sons and a daughter. These sons were Agulu, Menri (Nri of Agukwu), Onogu (Igbariam), Nsugbe, Nteje, and Amanuke who were founders of the various towns bearing their names. Eri's only daughter Adamgbo was not given in marriage but her children formed part of the Aguleri population. (M.C.M. Indigo, 1955 p. 5-9; N.A.I. C.S.O 26/28323 p.6-7.)

There is a fundamental difference between the two versions for while the first states that the Igala are Umueri half-brothers, the second derives the Umueri wholly from Igala country. After a study of the first version (Jeffreys 1956, p. 126) concluded that, "if the Umundri (Umreri) are not of actual Igala extraction, then the Umundri and the Igala have a common origin". His conclusions were based firstly on the similarity of the Onojo Ogboni traditions among the Igala and the Umueri clan; secondly on the claims of the Umueri clan to a right to crown the Atah of the Igala, and the latter's claim of the right to confer titles on the neighbouring Igbo towns.

Although Jeffreys conclusions are plausible, they seem to have been influenced by the diffusionist theories that were current at the time, for

(C.K. Meek, 1931, p.22) had published his work on the Jukun which suggested that the concept of kingship reached Nigeria from the east through the Sudan and Kanem-Bornu, and from there diffused westwards along the Benue valley. If it could be proved that the Umueri clan were of Igala extraction, that the Igala were of Jukun stock and that the Jukun came from the east Meek's ideas would be confirmed. This preoccupation to establish an oriental provenance for the divine kingship institution in Nigeria came out clearly in Jeffrey's final remarks when he wrote (1956, p. 131), that,

It is conceivable that the forerunners of both the Yoruba and of the Igala, and consequently of the Umundri, were of Jukun stock, or of the founders of the Jukun culture. Even if the Jukun are fathered with the Umundri culture, Dr. Meek has shown that the Jukun arrived at their present site from the east.

Elsewhere in his writings Jeffreys was more categorical; thus he cites such cultural traits found among the Umueri clan as village dual organisation, sun worship, and the sexagesimal method of counting cowries as evidence that "the Umundri culture can have only one origin namely Egypt." (N.A.E. E.P. 8766 C.S.E. 1/85/4596 "Awka Division Intelligence Report" (1930) by M.D.W. Jeffreys, pp. 12-13; 17-19; 268; M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1935, pp.350-1).

J.S. Boston, 1962, p.55 who also studied the two versions of Umueri traditions similarly concluded that the Umueri were of Igala stock. He based his conclusions on the apparent historicity of Igala military invasions of parts of northern Igboland preserved in the Onojo Ogoni traditions extant in both areas. Thus he regarded the second version of Umueri tradition of origin which stated that Eri was an Igala warrior as a reference to Igala raids into Igboland and the Umueri clan as descendants of the remnants of the war expedition. The first version of these traditions Boston regarded as:

"... part of a cycle of myths, about the origin of the civilised world, in which fact tends to be subordinated to various dogma concerning the creation of the world at Aguleri, and the revelation to Nri, by the Creator of the secrets of civilisation".

As will be shown below this version of the traditions also contain some measure of historical truth. A critical study of Igala relationship with the Igbo also shows that Onojo Ogoni raids into Igboland were a later development in the long history of Igbo-Igala interaction and does not, therefore, necessarily reflect the early pattern of contact between the two groups as Boston believed.

For a better understanding of Umueri traditions and their historical connection with the Igala, it is pertinent to underscore the primacy of the Nri in Igboland. In the past the Eze Nri of Agukwu wielded ritual and political influence over a great portion of Igboland. Nri men who had taken the ichi title with its distinctive facial scarification, and spear of peace (otonsi), travelled unmolested over a great part of Igboland as deputies of the Eze Nri. They ritually cleansed Igbo towns, conferred titles on qualified candidates, settled disputes between villages, enacted new codes of conduct, and created new markets and shrines. (M.A. Omujeogwu, 1974, p.30; A.G. Leonard, 1906, pp. 34-35). In this way the Nri ritualists provided the cultural unity of the northern Igbo groups,

among whom it was said that, "The street of the Nri family is the street of the gods, through which all who die in other parts of Iboland pass to the land of the Spirits". (A.G. Leonard, 1906, p. 37). N.W. Thomas 1913, p.48, one of the early ethnographers in Igboland, described the Eze Nri as "the spiritual potentate over a large extent of Igbo country". He was told by the Eze Nri that his influence had extended to the West Niger Igbo group and beyond as far as Idu (Benin City), although Thomas doubted whether the Nri went so far to the west. (A.G. Leonard, 1906, p. 38; M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1972, p.45 for a list of some of the towns and villages). Amongst the northern Igbo, kola nuts are traditionally broken by the oldest man present in any gathering. However, if an Nri man is present he is given the privilege of performing this function irrespective of his age relative to that of the others. The reason for according him this right according to the elders is because "they are the first Igbo".

From the role of the Nri in the development of Igbo cultural history it seems likely that the Umueri clan was one of the oldest groups and was based in the Onitsha-Awka area which is the most densely populated part of northern Igboland. It has been argued on other grounds that the Awka-Orlu highlands in which the Onitsha-Awka area is located was the earliest centre of population dispersal in Igboland and many Igbo towns and villages to the east and west of the Niger point specifically to the Umueri towns as their ancestral home. (N.W. Thomas, 1913, p.48).

Thus it would seem that Nri traditions, which claim autochthony for the Umueri clan in Igboland contain a kernel of historical truth. An increase in population which led to the movement of people from the highlands could be related to the development of agriculture and the knowledge of metallurgy to which the traditions refer. Indeed in one version of the Umueri tradition recorded by N.W. Thomas it was stated that before the introduction of yams human beings walked in the bush like animals. This tradition suggests the transition from a hunting and gathering to an agricultural life. Awka, which is in the Nri culture area, has also, for centuries been famous for its itinerant blacksmiths whose services most part of Igboland and beyond. For the extent of territory covered by Awka blacksmiths see M.D.W. Jeffreys, N.A.E. EP 8766 C.S.E. 1/85/4596 "Awka Division Intelligence Report" (1931), p. 563. The antiquity of Nri culture was demonstrated by the archaeological excavations at Igbo Ukwu where artefacts associated with the Eze Nri, have been dated to the ninth century A.D. It is significant that the towns of Agukwu-Nri and Oreri which still possess this institution are nine miles and one mile respectively from Igbo-Ukwu.

M.A. Onwuejeogwu, (1972, p.5-8) has shown that there is a cultural continuity between ancient Igbo-Ukwu and more recent Nri culture. For example: the facial marks found on some of the excavated bronze pendants heads are still to be observed on the faces of Nri elders, and on masks and pottery; the bronze coiled pythons from the excavation are representations of snakes still revered as sacred animals in the area, while the corpse buried in a sitting position at 'Igbo Richard' may have been a Eze Nri for on their deaths they are not buried prostrate like ordinary men but rather, clad in coronation robes are interred in a sitting posture within a carved irko-panelled room dug in the earth. (M.D.W. Jeffreys, "Awka Division Intelligence Report", p.24).

The argument is here advanced that the Umueri clan from its ancient roots in Igboland and its role in forging a cultural unity among the northern Igbo groups would not appear to be of Igala origin. Indeed Nri

traditions about Eri are similar to Ife traditions about Oduduwa in Yorubaland.

A study of Nri traditions reveals that they make reference to a primary migration from Aguleri to Agukwu, Igbariam and Amanuke, similar to that postulated by ethnographers for an early demographic movement from the Awka-Orlu highlands eastwards and southwards. Indeed Agukwu-Nri elders state that at the time Nri, their ancestor, arrived at the locality "there were no other towns in the immediate vicinity, nothing but open country, and so the settlement was called Agukwu, meaning, the great field". (M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1956, p. 121-122) M.A. Onwuejeogwu (1972, p. 26) believes that the polity from which the Umueri group originated was located in the upper Anambra valley.

An important point, Umueri clan's tradition of origin states that their half-brother Idah migrated north-westwards. It would seem possible, therefore, that the dispersal of Igbo population from the Awka-Orlu highlands extended as far north as Idah and this would give the Igala a very long period of intimate contact with the Igbo people. By using the Igbo Ukwu ninth century A.D. date as a baseline for the chronology of the evolution of Nri culture, M.A. Onwuejeogwu has suggested that the period during which Eri and his sons established new settlements including Idah was c/ 948-1041 A.D. (M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1974, p.54-5). Afigbo has argued that the population movement from the Awka-Orlu area was inspired by population increases arising from the knowledge of iron-working technology and a mastery of the environment (A.E. Afigbo, 1975, p.40-41). In any case these movements would predate the migration of Ayegba on Idoko to Idah and the establishment of the present ruling dynasty, for this has been dated to the close of the seventeenth century.

The Nri version of the Umueri traditions also says that the religious and political influence of the Eze Nri extended into Igala country. In the traditions it was stated that Eze Nri as a reward for distributing food to the surrounding Igbo towns and Idah, was given the right to crown Igala kings. Given the role of the Nri as ritual specialists in Igboland this tradition appears to refer to the existence of their ritual and political influence in Igala country. It is worthwhile to note that in the course of his investigations in Agukwu-Nri. Jeffreys was told by the elders that during the coronation ceremony of the Ata of Igala a Nri representative had to be there "to put the crown on his head", and the names of three living elders who had played this role were mentioned. Jeffreys considered it unlikely that this practice still obtained in view of the Ata's claim to confer titles on neighbouring Igbo towns. (M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1956, p.124) It would seem from these claims that Igbo ritual and political influence with its centre at Nri extended to surrounding areas, including Igalaland, before the rise of powerful militarised polities in that region eclipsed such influence.

That Nri ritual and political influence preceded the rise of the Igala state is further strengthened by the traditions of the Nsukka communities who live on the frontiers of the Igbo-Igala culture areas. In these communities it is stated that before Igala political influence became strong in that area they were under Nri hegemony. Thus their first kings were emigrants from Nri who brought into these towns religious cults such as the Ezoguda at Nsukka, the Ezugwu at Eha-Alumona, and the Agbala at Nibo. However, with the extension of Igala influence in the area the towns began to identify more with the Igala and to adopt new names such as Nsukka-Asadu,

and Eha Alumona-Ata. These suffixes were the titles of Igala officials and were meant to symbolise the power of the towns to which they were appended. (E.K. Meek, 1930, p.7-11)

The same cultural sequence is reflected in the Nri traditions which state that Idah gave birth to Onojo Ogboni. In Igala and Igbo tradition, Onojo Ogboni looms large as a mighty warrior who raided parts of northern Igboland and the Idoma country. Igala traditions narrated that he was related to the Idah royal family maternally, but was not qualified to ascend the throne. He therefore travelled to Ogurugu, the Igala town on the Anambra river, whence he raided neighbouring towns, taking captives whom he settled in Ogurugu (R.S. Seton, 1928, p.267-8).

From the location of Ogurugu on the Anambra river it seems likely that Onojo Ogboni also mounted canoe-borne raids. At Onitsha at the confluence of the Niger and Anambra rivers Onojo Ogboni is said to have attacked the town in the reign of Obi Aroli. (R.N. Henderson, 1972, p.86-89). Both the traditions and the date underscore the fact that Onojo Ogboni raids were late developments in Igbo-Igala relations for from Igala traditions, it is clear that Onojo Ogboni's activities belong to the dynastic era of the Atas of Idah as distinct from the pre-dynastic period to which Nri traditions refer.

The fact that these raids began after the dispersal of the descendants of Eri from Aguleri and the establishment of new settlements far from the Anambra river, could help to explain the two different versions of the origin of Eri among the Umueri clan. Those riverain Umueri towns like Aguleri, Igbariam, and Nsugbe which were raided by the Igala came to derive Eri from Igala country, while Nri and Oreri towns insulated from these attacks by their location in the hinterland still preserved memories of the original pattern of events. Indeed it is probable that the riverain version of the Umueri tradition originated from Igala warriors and their descendants for some Igala traditions affirm that riverain towns like Asaba, Ojor, and Igga along the Anambra river were formerly Igala military and trading outposts established by emigrants from Ogurugu. (Oral accounts by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu 12/1/81.) Perhaps one of such outposts in Aguleri was subsequently absorbed by the Igbo population but preserved a memory of its ancestral origin from Igaland. It does seem, therefore, that the Umueri tradition which claims that Idah was a younger half-brother of Eri's sons and implies an Igbo movement northwards is probably historically more likely than the second version.

That this was the early pattern of interaction is also reflected in the Igala Achudu legend. The Achadu clan is the senior of a group of clans called the Igala Mela, or nine Igala, who were the original inhabitants of Idah before the immigration of the present royal clan. They are (p.81) 'the kingmakers' and the Achadu, the head of the Achadu clan, is the next highest official after the king and in charge of the relationship between the Igala and their Igbo neighbours in the Nsukka area when this came under Igala political control. This meant that among other things the Achadu acted as a court patron for Igbo title aspirants who travelled to Idah to receive their titles from the Ata. The population of his clan exceeds that of all other eight put together and most of its members live in the south-eastern part of the kingdom.

According to Igala traditions Omeppa, the first Achadu was either an

Igbo slave, or an Igbo hunter, who lost his way and was captured in Igala territory. At the royal court, because of his beauty queen Ebele Jaunu married him. (M. Clifford, 1936, pp. 395-397). Other traditions state that he was an Igbo hunter who settled in the Igalogwa section of Idah and established control over the indigenous Igala inhabitants of the town. When the Jukun prince Ayegba cm Idoko arrived at Idah he was welcomed by Omeppa and the Igala as their ruler. Later when the Igala were invaded by the Jukun, apparently because of Ayegba's interference in a Jukun sphere of influence, Omeppa and Ayegba together repulsed the attack. (R.S. Seton, 1928, pp. 269-270; N.A.K.k S.N.P. 17: K 2445 "Anthropological and Historical Notes on the Igala Peoples" (1923) by Keith Officer, pp. 2-4. Current Igala traditions tend to emphasize the hunter version of this legend. Oral account by Peter A. Achema (51 years) the Achadu of Igala, Ainoko Adebo (40 years), and Awulu Ata (50 years) interviewed at Ida 4/1/79.

The first quoted version of the Achadu legend refers to the Amagedde phase of Igala dynasty and its first four rulers, Abutu, Eje, Ebele Jaunu, Agenapoje, and Idoko who were believed to have reigned in Amagedde to the north-east of Igala land near the river Benue. The founder of the Idah dynasty was Idoko's son, Ayegba cm Idoko. Miles Clifford has argued that from Omeppa's genealogy, Queen Ebele Jaunu's husband was not Omeppa himself but one of his ancestors. He maintained, therefore, that during the sojourn of an Igala ruler at Amagedde, Omeppa had travelled southwards to Idah where he established some influence over the inhabitants. When Ayegba ascended the throne, Omeppa invited him to Idah to become their ruler. Thus Omeppa is portrayed as having prepared the ground for the arrival of the ruling dynasty. (M. Clifford, 1936, p.397). When the tradition is presented in this way it agrees to a great extent with the other version which associated Omeppa directly with Idah before the arrival of Ayegba.

In spite of the differences in the style of presentation between the Igbo and Igala traditions certain underlying common themes are discernible. The first is that there was an Igbo population in the Igala country in pre 17th century times, secondly, the Igbo population was strong enough to exercise considerable influence in their region before the arrival of the Jukun royal clan. This would explain the desire of the Jukun immigrants to win the local Igbo support, represented by Omeppa, before they could consolidate their authority. This was effected by a marriage between Omeppa or one of his ancestors and the Jukun queen Ebele Jaunu. Thirdly, Igbo influence in Igala land was of a ritual nature, and the migrant groups maintained only religious attachments with Nri, their traditional home, while carrying with them the Igbo culture of the time. Igbo groups also moved into other surrounding areas including the region to the west of the Niger.

It is significant that the Achadu legend like the Nri version of the Eri legend attests to the existence of Igbo-Igala relations before the establishment of the present ruling dynasty of Idah suggesting that Igbo-Igala contact has a considerable time-depth. Both traditions also point to the northward movement of people from Igboland into the Igala country. It is important to note that Awka and Nri communities, which have traditions of communication with the Igala, are represented as the ancestral homeland of many Igbo towns and villages. Eastwards in the Nsukka Igbo area, towns like Obodo Aba, Ihakpu, and Ihaka state that their founders were migrants from Nri. Westwards along the river Niger and beyond it many towns and villages have similar tradition, like Asaba, Abarra, Anam, and sections of Nzam, and Atani on the banks of the Niger Owa, Ogwashi-Ukwu, Ibusa and

Okpanam further west. (N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29361 "Intelligence Report on Udunedem Confederation, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province" (1934), by O.P. Gunning, pp. 9-10; N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29603 "Intelligence Report on Eketekete Group, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province (1934), by J.Dixon, pp. 3-8. D.Forde, and G.I. Jones, 1950, pp.46-51. It is significant that in almost every community where there is a mixed Igbo and Igala, or Igbo and Edo population, the traditions emphasize that an 'Igbo people' was met by the later 'Igala or Edo' immigrants.

One probable reason for this movement of population from northern Igboland into the Igala country was the striking contrast in soil fertility between the two areas. (M.D.W. Jeffreys, "Awka Division Intelligence Report", p. 13; N.W. Thomas, 1913, Part I, p.6; N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/30537 *op.cit.* p.2. While the Igala area is very fertile, the northern part of Igboland is notorious for its infertility, (the Igbo topographical name for this region is Igbo ana ocha or sun-baked land, a cryptic reference to its soil condition). From the dense 19th century population concentration in this area it seem likely that the soil depreciation may have been connected with intense cultivation that had lasted for a long time. The progressive decline in soil fertility in itself would have stimulated population dispersal to richer environments.

In addition it has been suggested that the increase in population and the decrease in soil fertility in northern Igboland inspired the emergence of specialist groups such as priests, blacksmiths and long distance traders and encouraged them to extend their activities to neighbouring groups including the Igala. (G.I. Jones, 1963, pp. 14-16; R.N. Henderson, 1973, p. 165).

A gradual drift of Igbo population to the north would largely account for the preponderant Igbo influence in parts of Southern Igala land. In the early part of this century N.W. Thomas was struck by this feature when he wrote:

East of the Niger,... I found a knowledge of Ibo extending fully one day's march into the Igara country, but no corresponding knowledge of Igara on the Igbo side of the frontier. (N.W. Thomas, 1914, p.5).

The southern Igala group called Ibaji is composed of a mixture of Igala, Igbo and Ishan peoples. Ibaji customs are strongly rooted in Igbo culture for the people bear Igbo names, possess Igbo title and age grade systems, and are bilingual in Igala and Igbo. It is worthwhile to note that the Ibaji area, owing to its location on the Niger floodplain, is the most fertile province of Igala land. To the east of Ibaji in the Adoru district customs have a strong affinity with those of the Igbo and this could also be partly explained by an earlier northward population movement. (N.A.K. Lokoprof, 1624 "Report on Ibaji District" 1920 by N.J. Brooke, pp. 3-9 "Report on Adoru District" (1941) by Messrs E.H.M. Counsel and B.C. Cartland, p.2). It is likely that a great part of this process would have taken place before the rise of the Igala kingdom as a military power in the 17th century. In fact it has been suggested that Igala militarism dispersed Igbo inhabitants of the Anambra and Mamu river basin who fled to the plateau of northern Igboland. With the decline of the kingdom in the later part of the nineteenth century there was a resumption of gradual movement of population from the plateau to the fertile valley. (M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1972, p.26).

Two other aspects of the Achadu tradition require closer scrutiny. The first is that Omeppa is said to have been a professional hunter who settled in Igala country. There are traditions, in many Nigerian communities, which refer to their founding fathers as migrant hunters. When it is remembered that in earlier times there was also more game than is currently extant, some measure of historical credence could be accorded to these traditions. Just as in the Delta region of Nigeria many settlements developed out of temporary fishing camps, it is also likely that inland some temporary hunting camps became permanent settlements. Such hunting camps would have been sited in localities that abounded in game and the transitional vegetation of the Igala country, (forest to savannah woodlands) was particularly favourable for game. Indeed Miles Clifford was convinced that the movement of Igala groups eastwards was for hunting and exploitation of the silvan wealth of the area. (M.Clifford, 1936, p.396, N.A.K. S.N.P. 17: 2445 *op.cit.* p.35). The hunter legends can also be viewed from another perspective, namely, by considering the status of hunters in those societies that have such traditions. J.S. Boston, (1964, p.124), has shown that among the Igala successful hunters "are invariably ritual specialists". This ritual dimension to the hunter legends when applied to the Igbo origin of Omeppa enhances the credibility of Nri claims to early influence in Igala land.

The other aspect of the Achadu tradition that requires closer examination is the identification of Omeppa as being of slave descent. This could be true for later in the earlier 19th century the thickly populated northern Igbo area exported slaves to the sparsely populated Igala country in exchange for textile goods, beads, and horses. (A.E. Afigbo, 1973, p.79, A.J. Shelton, 1971, p.20). Some of the slaves were exported northwards through the trans-Saharan trade routes to the North African states, while the rest were assimilated into the society as a domestic labour force. With the inception of the Atlantic slave trade most of the slaves were marched overland to Idah whence they were transported by canoe down the Niger to the coast. E. Isichei (1956, p.93) has suggested the possibility that, like Jaja of Opobo, Omeppa attained political prominence in Igala kingdom. As with the hunter legends, A. Obayemi (1976, p.259), pointed out that slaves in the early context were often skilled men who achieved prominence in alien societies and established large lineages. R.G. Armstrong's comment (1955, p.99) that among the Idoma, the Igala neighbours to the east, "a slave is somebody without family to defend him", suggests that foreign specialists, including those from Igboland, without any cultural roots in Igala society would have been called slaves.

A clearer understanding of the significance of the Achadu legend in Igala history is achieved when the ethnic diversity of Igala society is taken into consideration. The Igala from linguistic evidence, are of Yoruba stock. The region which was to become land inhabited by an indigenous population called 'Akpoto' by the Igala, who are thought by some authorities to be of Idoma stock and to have been progressively absorbed by the Igala through acculturation (N.A.K., S.N.P. 17: K 2013 "Ethnological Notes on the Tribes in Idah Division Kabba Province" (1926) by J. Noel Smith, p.2; R.G. Armstrong, 1955, pp.79-80). Igala oral traditions as already shown (B) that from the west, the region received population accretion from Benin, perhaps in the form of royal immigrants, that the east, the Jukun empire with its capital at Wukari exerted some influence while to the north of the country are the Basa Ngo Nupe-speaking group, and the Basa Komo who speak a semi-Bantu language. The riverain clans which dominated the Niger trade

were of Bassa, Gwari, and Igbirra extraction. (G.R. Mott, "The Connections of the Atas of Igala with the Obas of Bein enclosed in N.A.K. S.N.P.: K 2445 op. cit.; J.S. Boston, 1962, pp. 376-383).

Considering the multi-ethnic composition of Igala kingdom the Achadu legend would seem to represent a Igbo contribution and suggests the progressive absorption of Igbo elements by the nascent Igala state from predynastic times. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the Igala state was dominant in the Niger-Benue Confluence region, it exerted considerable influence on the borderland Igbo communities whose rulers began to visit Idah to receive their titles. From Ogunugu, the Igala town on the Anambra river, military raids were mounted on neighbouring Igbo towns resulting in a further spread of Igala population and culture into parts of Igboland. This later development is represented by the Onojo Ogboni traditions in both Igala and Igbo communities.

The Achadu tradition takes a different form in the Nsukka area where many Igbo communities claim that their founder was an Achadu who came from the Igala kingdom. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/30106 "Intelligence Report on the Obukpa, Itchi, Nnadu Group" (1934) by W.R.T. Milne, p.4. Igbo populations headed by the Achadu with its political centre at Idah. The second possibility is that the Nsukka traditions were generated by the functional role of the Achadu as a mediator between the Nsukka Igbo communities and the Ata's court.

Oral sources and political arrangements in Igala kingdom seem to show that Omeppa wielded some influence over the indigenous population at Idah before the arrival of Ayegba the Jukun prince. The political organisation of the kingdom seems to have taken cognisance of the pre-dynastic importance of the Achada. He is not only the next highest political official to the king, but also enjoys to a large measure, similar political privileges. For example, the office was hereditary within his own clan, and he has a separate court at Igalowa in the capital. The Achadu could confer titles on members of his clan, and like the Ata has a large number of retainers called edibo. Owing to the powers and privileges enjoyed by the Achadu it has been pointed out that Igala political organisation manifests a dual structure of political power and two separate and semi-independent rulers appeared to have controlled political affairs in the state. (P.C. Dike 1977 p.20;) For a similar set-up at Wukari in the Jukun Kingdom, see C.K. Meek, 1931 p. 340. It would seem, therefore, that the immigrant royal clan took the pre-existing arrangements into consideration in the new state. The Achadu was consequently left as an intermediary between the Igbo and the Ata's court. The Nsukka Igbo claims could mean that some members of the Achadu clan later migrated southwards to establish settlements in parts of Igboland all of which came under the control of the clan head whose seat was at Idah. It is also possible that the role of the Achadu as the official in charge of the relationship between the Ata's court and the Igbo, and the Achadu's right to confer titles directly on some Igbo rulers may have elevated him into an heroic figure and inspired constructions of genealogical connections between his clan and other Igbo communities.

While, away from the river, a movement of people from south to north as is reflected in both the Umueri and Achadu legends, the situation along the river valleys appears to have been the reverse. Oral traditions of many Igbo communities along the river Niger attest to early contact with the Igald. Onitasha traditions state that when their founding fathers arrived from the west Niger Igbo area they met Igala fishermen who ferried

them across the Niger. The head of the Igala community was Ulutu whose descendants are the present day Mgbelekele family of Onitsha. The lineage head of this family is the priest of the town's earth deity, Ani Onitsha. Recognising the fact that the Igala community resided in the town before the arrival of the Igbo and so had a special ritual connection with the earth deity (S.I. Bosah, n.d. pp. 11, 15; I. Nzimiro, 1972 p.41. For the significance of the earth deity in West Africa Societies see Horton, J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.) 1971 1st ed. pp. 94-97). The more numerous Igbo immigrants later dominated the political affairs of the town and supplied the major political officials including the king. Thus while the indegones provided the land the immigrants supplied the personnel, showing a political arrangement characteristic of many West African polities.

The movement of Igbo population from the West Niger area eastwards has been attributed to the rise of Benin kingdom as an imperial power. In particular the Ezechima migrations of which the Onitsha people formed a part have been associated with the Benin-Idah war of 1517 in the reign of Oba Esigie of Benin. The disruption caused by this conflict forced some of the Igbo communities under Benin suzerainty to flee eastwards for safety. (R.N. Henderson, 1972 p. 81-2). The founders of Onitsha are believed to have settled in the town between 1650 and 1680. (R.W. Henderson 1963 p. 18). This would argue for a pre-seventeenth century date for the establishment of some of the Igala riverain settlements in present day Igboland. One should note that before the start of the Atlantic slave trade and the expansion of the Niger trade the banks of the river Niger in Igbo territory were either uninhabited or were sparsely populated. This was because of the low-lying and marshy nature of the terrain especially during the rainy season, and because the Igbo were mainly farmers and so were concentrated away from the rivers, and were always afraid of waterborne attack.

A gradual process of infiltration of Igala fishermen into Igbo territory may have formed the core of some of the present day Igbo towns along the Niger. According to Igala traditions the lower Niger towns of Aboh, Okpaiye, Umuolu, Onya, Ndoni, and Osomari were of Igala origin. (J.S. Boston 1960 p.54). It would seem, however, from the contradiction between Aboh and Igala traditions, that such Igala claims could refer to pre-Ezechima migrations to Aboh. This is because Aboh traditions explicitly state that their ancestral founders came from the West Niger Igbo area. (A.G. Leonard 1906 p.35). Perhaps, as in the Onitsha example, Igala migrant fishermen formed part of the inhabitants of Aboh before the arrival of the West Niger immigrants. Nevertheless, the later traditions of the Igbo riverain towns themselves show that organised migrations from Idah as distinct from the previous infiltration took place. Thus the eight towns of Ika, Iteku, Inyamam, Inoma, Uje, Odekpe, Oko and Osomari state that they fled from their original home in Idah to avoid punishment from the Ata of Igala for the non-payment of their annual tribute. A variant of this tradition recounts that Odekpe, Oko, and Osomari were originally subjects of the Ata living in the lower Niger floodplain near Anam. They were driven out by warrior 'ants' sent by the Ata to attack them. (I. Nzimiro 1972 p.17; R.N. Henderson 1972 p.68).

Osomari traditions specify that on the arrival of Igala immigrants they met autochthonous Igbo inhabitants of Ndam and Umuchi probably from Nri. The Igbo inhabitants agreed to live with the Igala provided that they destroyed human twins and sheep which were taboo to the Igbo. The more numerous Igala groups, Ndam being attached to Ugolo, and Umuchi to

Umuonyiogwu. The Umuchi sub-lineage head was retained as the priest of the land deity. (I. Nzimino 1972 p. 88).

From the above traditions one can postulate violence of some sort as the immediate cause for demographic movement downstream from Idah. The references to requests for the payment of tribute and attacks by the Ata seem to indicate territorial expansion by the growing Igala state. Such wars of expansion quite often set off a succession of refugees fleeing to more secure locations. By 1517 A.D. the Igala state was engaged in a major war with the Edo kingdom of Benin. The real cause of the war is not known, but P.A. Talbot (1926 vol. 1, p.157) has speculated on causes of the conflict. He wrote:

During his (Oba Esigie's) reign the Igala are said to have been driven over the eastern side of the Niger. Esigie is also stated to have defeated his younger brother, named Aji-Attah of Idah. It may be that this actually occurred and that Idah had been previously conquered and that the brother, who had been put in charge rose against Esigie. It seems more probable, however, that the story refers to the conquest of Idah and the placing of a younger brother on the throne under the title of the Atta.

It is likely that some Igala people were displaced from Idah during this encounter. Igala traditions affirm that the defeated Igala soldiers fearing punishment from the Ata for losing the war, crossed the Niger and settled in the Ibaji area of the kingdom bordering Igboland. (P.E. Okwoli 1973, p.38).

The Igala have no traditions about the cause of this war. According to the Benin historian, J.U. Egharevba, (1960, p.27) the conflict was instigated by Oliha, a Benin nobleman to take vengeance on Oba Esigie. This he achieved by sending messages of imminent invasion by the Igala to Oba Esigie. This tradition would seem to veil the struggle by Benin and Igala kingdom for the control of the West Niger area which had been under Benin suzerainty. Igala traditions associate the territorial expansion of the kingdom with the reign of Ayegba om Idokoin the late seventeenth century. It has been suggested by some writers that the Benin-Idah war led to the disintegration of the Benin empire and the independence of its former vassal states such as Igala and Nupe. (S.F. Nadel, 1942, p.75, 1969 pp. 13-14).

An additional incentive for later waves of migration from Idah downstream was the increasing importance of the river Niger as a commercial waterway. This development was brought about by the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade, the number of Igala merchants participating in it increasing and erstwhile fishing camps being converted into trade depots and stopping places. In this way the sparsely populated banks of the Niger witnessed an increase in population. From about the middle of the seventeenth century, as the Igala moved downstream Aboh merchants moved upstream and the commercial nature of the riverain settlements show that the Niga trade was a major stimulus for later waves of migration from Igala land into Igbo territory. Writing about Osomari in the nineteenth century Bishop Crowther (1876, p.536) remarked that the town was "peopled by the Igala originally as a trading station or market".

There were three main periods of Igala movement southward along the Niger. The first period was that of migration of fishermen and the establishment of fishing camps; this could be called "the infiltration stage" and existed before the seventeenth century. The number of people involved must have been small. A greater number of people were involved in the second period which could be called "the commercial phase". This began in the seventeenth century, reached its peak in the eighteenth century and continued into the early decades of the nineteenth century. It, therefore, overlapped the third period which was "the military expansion phase" beginning at the close of the seventeenth century, during which time Igala refugees from the turbulence within the kingdom fled southwards.

These developments largely account for the presence of Igala citizens in the Igbo riverain settlements. Of the twenty-three clans or village groups into which the riverain Igbo sub-culture was divided by D. Ford and G.I. Jones (1950 p.49-57) six communities contain people of Igala descent; these are Nzam, Anam, Oko Okwe, Atani, Osonari, and Abarra. That some of these communities such as the villages in Nzam are bilingual in Igbo and Igala language is a reflection of the level of their admixture. (N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/30712 "Intelligence Report on the Nzam Native Court Area, Onitsha Division, Onitsha Province" (1935) by W.R.T. Milne, p.2).

Directly related to early Igbo-Igala contact is the portrayal of a horse in one of the bronze objects (Horsemen Hilt) found in the burial chamber at Igbo Richard. It is not certain when horses were first imported into Igboland at Igbo Ukwie, but it is well known that in recent times the northern Igbo have purchased horses in great numbers from the Igala. Most of the horse are used for funeral rites and for title-taking ceremonies called Ogbu Anyinya (Horse Killers). These horses were brought by Hausa merchants across the River Benue into Igala country where they were sold at the important horse fair at Ejule. (N.A.K. Lokoprof 1625 "Report on Igala Ogora District" (1949), by E.H.M. Counsell, p.2).

It would appear that Igalaland was a gateway for the introduction of exotic commodities and new ideas into Igboland. That this was probably the case is supported by the fact that before the advent of the European merchants on the West Africa coast in the late fifteenth century, the region had been in a commercial relationship with the outside world through the overland routes to North Africa. The geographical location of Igala country at the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers placed it in an advantageous position in the north-south trade. In addition there was the east-west trade axis following the Niger and Benue rivers which also converged with the north-south trade routes in the confluence region. The confluence area thus became a major hub of commercial activities acting as a clearing-house for goods exchanged between the savannah region to the north and the forest belt to the south. The flourishing commerce in this zone provides one of the clues to the development of kingdoms in this region, thus by 1517 A.D. there had emerged an Igala kingdom powerful enough to constitute a formidable threat to the Edo Kingdom of Benin.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE EUROPEAN IMPETUS AND THE INTENSIFICATION OF COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

In the preceding chapter the pattern of interactions between the Igbo and the Igala before 1650 was examined. It was shown that by that time contacts had been established between them both by land along the River Niger. In this chapter we shall examine in detail the trading contacts between both groups and the impact of the European impetus on their commercial relations after 1650.

Studies of the economic life of Igboland have revealed that there were two distinctive but interrelated trading spheres, the western one was centred on the Lower Niger, its tributaries and in the immediate hinterland, the other lay further to the east. (For demarcation of Igboland into the eastern and western trading spheres see S. Ottenberg, 1958 pp. 304-308; I.U. Ukwu, 1967, pp. 650-655; D. Northrup, 1972, p. 217; R.N. Henderson, 1972 pp. 25-26). In its northern extension the western trading sphere incorporated the Igala kingdom while the eastern part was linked to the Idoma country. This western trading sphere can be split into two different but closely interwoven systems. The first was based on the Lower Niger waterway and its tributaries had canoes as the major means of transportation; it has been called "the Trading System of the Lower Niger" or "the Igala-Aboh Axis", from the two centres that eventually controlled trade along the waterways. The second was based on land portage and could be called "the Trading System of the Igbo-Igala Borderland".

It is not clear when trading contact between the Igbo and the Igala began. But the presence of such exotic commodities copper, a horse model and some carnelian beads at Igbo-Ukwu are strong pointers to the considerable time-depth for the inception of commercial exchanges and the fact that the probable sources of the alien goods have been located in the north makes it probable that the Igala were one of the groups through which they were transmitted into Igboland. It was very likely that these goods reached Igbo-Ukwu through numerous intermediaries because it has been pointed out (U. Ukwu 1967, p.648-9) that a characteristic feature of Igbo and Igala economic life was the market system in specific days in various towns and villages.

Apart from Igbo trade links with their northern neighbour, an important feature of which was the importation of luxury goods, the Igbo also had important trade contacts with their southern neighbour the Ijo speaking people. An important stimulus for the development of trade between the Igbo and the Ijo was the ecological differentiation between the Inland and Delta regions. Owing to its marshy environment and the salinity of its rivers the Delta region could not support an agricultural economy. Its inhabitants were, therefore, predominantly fishermen and salt producers. They exchanged their salt and smoked fish for yams, palm oil and livestock from their northern Igbo neighbours who engaged in agriculture. Thus emerged north-south trade system in which foodstuff formed a large proportion of the trade commodities. These items must have been transported over long distances, not by far ranging caravans, but through

the chains of numerous local markets. A regional trading system was thus evolved incorporating the Delta Ijo, the Igbo and the Igala (E.J. Alagon 1970, p.319-329).

One important item in this regional trade which was carried over long distances was salt and some of the salt imported into Igboland from the Delta was transported further north into Igala country. Another important source of salt for Igbo and Igala was the salt-lake at Uburu in the north-eastern part of Igboland, a situation which ensured its prominence as a trade centre in Northern Igboland. The Igala also procured salt from the Jukun kingdom to the north-east along the river Benue; this valuable salt trade was monopolised by the Ewe clan of the Igala kingdom. (V.C. Uchendu, 1965, p.35; A.E. Afigbo 1977, p. 129. J.S. Boston, 1968, p.116. Beads constituted important luxury items in the regional trade. In recent times the Igala country has been a major source for the supply of a variety of beads to the Igbo people, and it is probable that this trade had existed for a long time. (A.E. Afigbo, 1973, p.86). Furthermore, akori beads which Benin merchants traded along the coast as far as to modern Ghand before the arrival of the Europeans, were believed to have been procured through Aboh in the Delta; these beads were thought to have reached Aboh from the north down the river Niger. (D. Northrop, 1972, p.220-221).

Metal products, especially farming implements were also highly important as trade items. It would seem that the famous centre for blacksmithing at Awka town in Igboland, from its mention in the myth of the origin of the Umeri towns, one of the oldest Igbo groups, had long practised their skills and their metal implements were distributed through the market system to other parts of Igboland, to the Igala country, and to the Delta region. The Igala also had a smithing tradition but it does not seem to have been sufficiently well-established and widespread to meet the demands of the Igala people, and they were dependent on the Awka smiths for a substantial amount of their metal requirements including ornaments. (NAK, SNP 10: 320P1921 "Munshi Province - Assessment Report on Idah Division, Dekina District" by T.M. Macleod. p. 10; J.S. Boston, 1964, p.46.) The Peripatetic Awka smiths later penetrated the Igala country and the Delta area where they settled temporarily and practised their occupation before returning home. (G.I. Jones, 1963, p.13-16). Indeed, it is probable that the Awka smiths, owing to the immunity from attack which they enjoyed, were among the pioneers of the long distance trade routes that crossed the region.

Equally important as trade commodities were textile goods. The Igala possessed a well-developed and active cotton weaving industry and certain types of Igala cloth were earlier imported into Igboland for ritual purposes. (NAE EP 8766 CSE 1/85/4596 "Awka Division Intelligence Report". (1930) by M.D.W. Jeffreys, p. 293.) Igbo groups in the Nsukka area also practised weaving and would seem to have exported some of their products northwards, where they were seen by the nineteenth century Europeans. (W.B. Baikie, 1886, p.287-8, 297).

Slaves were also valued commodities in the regional trade. Some of the slaves would have been purchased from the Igala whose early political prominence in the Niger-Benue Confluence region conferred on them tributary payments including slaves, from the surrounding states. (S.F. Nadel, 1942, p.72-3). Slaves were also purchased by the Igala from the Nsukka Igbo groups and subsequently transported downstream to the Ijo. It would seem that the north-south trade on the river Niger had been well-established

before the arrival of the Europeans on the Nigerian coast. This is indicated by a Portuguese report at the end of the fifteenth century in which Pacheco Pereira described trade along the Rio Real estuary. He wrote:

The bigger canoes here, made from a single trunk, are the largest in the Ethiopias of Guinea; some of them large enough to hold eighty men, and they come from a hundred leagues or more up the river bringing yams in large quantities; they also bring man slaves, cows, goats and sheep. They sell all this to the natives of the village for salt and our ships buy these things for copper bracelets, which are here prized more than brass ones, a slave being sold for eight to ten of such bracelets.

As E.J. Alagoa (1970, p.319) has argued, it was the stimulus provided by the north-south trade in addition to the east-west trade within the Delta region itself, that largely accounts for "the formation of the state systems, in ways similar to the better known changes wrought by the overseas trade".

Given the regional basis for this early trading system and its dependence on the markets, it seems unlikely that there existed at the time well-defined long distance trade routes. The general pattern in the interior before the advent of the Europeans appears to have been that of a network of routes linking the local markets.

The arrival of the European traders in the late fifteenth century initiated a direct contact between the coastal inhabitants and the outside world. This stimulated changes in the coastal areas, and in the interaction between the coastal peoples and their hinterland neighbours. Initially the main exports from West Africa were gold, ivory, gum, timber, pepper, and slaves, in exchange for European manufactured goods such as firearms, textiles, spirits and metal wares. The slaves purchased by the Europeans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were used to work the sugar plantations off the coast of West Africa, while others were exported to the silver mines in South America. The demand for slave labour at this time was minimal. (A.G. Hopkins, 1973, p.87-90; P.D. Curin, 1971, p.246-8).

The establishment of sugar plantations in the West Indies and parts of the Americas in the middle of the seventeenth century led to a rapid expansion of the slave trade in West Africa.

Owing to the population density of the West African coast, and the hostile climate which took heavy tolls of European lives, there was little penetration of the hinterland by white traders. This was to the advantage of the coastal inhabitants who thus became the middlemen in the increased trade between the hinterland. The coastal peoples experienced economic prosperity and certain change in their political institutions designed to cope with the pressures of the new trade. (K.D. Dike, 1956, p.24; G.I. Jones, 1963, p.29-30).

In southern Nigeria it has been shown that the European trade brought about increased migration from the hinterland to the coast in order to benefit from the new commerce. (S. Ottenberg, 1958, p. 305; M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1974, p.39-42). Changes were not restricted to the coast but extended to the hinterland and took place in the pattern of trade routes, the volume of trade and its organization. In the Eastern Trading Zone

there was a realignment of the network of trade routes in north-south direction similar to the development of the waterways. A new set of hinterland middlemen emerged and pioneered long distance trade routes designed to meet the increasing demands of the overseas trade; in the Eastern Zone these were Arochukuwu, Nkwere and Abiriba Igo traders. In the West Zone a variety of trade participated in the commerce, including those from Aboh, Nri, Awka, Oguta, Nsukka, and Igala.

There is a consensus amongst scholars that by the middle of the seventeenth century the Niger had been transformed into a major commercial artery. Consequently hinterland dwellers flocked to the river banks to control strategic and commercial locations in a way similar to developments along the coast. According to K.O. Dike, (1956, p.25-6), this happened when further migrations to the coast were blocked by the older Ijo states and many of these emigrants came from the Benin area; However, Dike omitted to state that a substantial number of people also came from the Igala country and Igboland.

### The trading system of the Lower Niger

By far the most important waterway in their system was the river Niger itself which passes through Igala and Igbo territories. At Onya below Aboh the Niger bifurcates into the Forcados which flows through Itsekiri kingdom in the western delta, and the Nun which fans through into Brass and Kalabari kingdoms in the eastern delta. One of the Niger's major tributaries, the Anambra, has its headwaters deep in Igala country flows southwards through Igboland into the Niger at Onitsha. Halfway between Onitsha and Aboh, at Osomari, a navigable stream flows out of the Niger into the Oguta Lake, and re emerging as the Orashi river, flows southwards into the Engenni river and so into Brass and Kalabari states. The navigability of this waterway provided an alternative route to the Delta which bypassed Aboh. From the West Niger Igbo area the river Otaw rises near Ubiaja and flows eastwards into the Niger near the Igala town of Inyele. (Fig. ).

Initially the main traders along these rivers were the Ijo of the Delta, the Akiri-Igbo who were the original inhabitants of present-day Aboh, and the Igala to the north. These three groups formed the ancient base for the north-south trade (R.N. Henderson, 1972, p.51). However, with the increasing economic opportunity people were attracted from the hinterland to the river banks, important groups being the Aboh who belonged to the Umuezechima group. These are believed to have left the West Niger Igbo area because of the turmoil created by the Idah Benin wars in the sixteenth century. When they arrived at Agbor one party led by Oreze continued eastwards across the Niger to settle in Onitsha and another led by Esumai, or according to another version of the tradition by Ogwe, (N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/26729, "Aboh-Benin Clans of Warri Province" (1930-31) by G.B. Williams and E.A. Miller, p. 7; I. Nzimiro, 1972, pp. 11-12. J.W. Hubbard, 1948, pp. 199ff), stuck out southwards and settled in Ashaka. It was from Ashaka that they moved into their present location at Aboh, essentially to participate in the Niger commerce. On their arrival they fought with the dispersed the autochthones, the Akiri-Igbo, who fled and established the new settlements of Akri-uteri, Akri-ogidi, and Akri-antani or Akri-Ozizor. These new settlements continued to pay tribute to their conquerors at Aboh. In a remarkable feat of adaptation the Aboh kingdom soon became a major naval power dominating the southern half of the Lower Niger trade. The rise of Aboh kingdom was significant in Igbo-Igala contact because the Igala

merchants now had a major rival in the Niger commerce. This was because of the substantial population of the town of Aboh as opposed to the sparse previous population of the Akri-Igbo.

The geographical location of Aboh at the apex of the Niger delta enabled it to control the supply of hinterland commodities to the coastal states, and the distribution of European goods upriver. Aboh's role as a major supplier of slaves to the delta merchants was noticed by the Lander brothers (1841, vol. 2 p.218), when they passed through that kingdom in 1830. The Landers noted that

Aboh has for a series of years been the principal slave mart for the native traders from the coast between the Bonny and the Old Calabar rivers...

An important source of slaves for Aboh was through raids on neighbouring communities and it has been shown by I. Nzimiro (1972, p.57), that the expansion of Aboh from one to six settlements was achieved through the establishment of military outposts for such attacks by chiefs called Olinzele. With the increasing power of those settlements Aboh was able to control access to the Niger and so acquired the appellation "Abo Obuchili Osimili" meaning "Abo, the guard and defender of the Niger". Aboh's acquisition of firearms from the delta traders and its control of their distribution upriver was decisive in ensuring kingdom's military superiority on the lower Niger; The commissioners of a 1841 expedition reporting that Aboh's sovereignty was acknowledged for about fifty-five miles upriver on both banks. (W. Allen & T.R. N. Thompson, 1848, vol. 1, p.233). These military forays had by the late eighteenth century extended along the Anambra river where oral traditions still recount stories of kidnapping by Aboh canoe men (Ogolo Iwoba (60 years), and Nelson Okoye (58 years) interviewed at Otuocha Aguleri, and Umuleri respectively on 22nd January, 1979).

However, Aboh's desire to control trade in the Igbo section of the Niger did not go unchallenged and in the nineteenth century led to wars such as that between Aboh and Osomari in the 1820s. (E. Kaine, 1963, p.60). Osomari, midway between Onitsha and Aboh, was founded by Igala migrants from Idah and soon came under the influence of Aboh and became tributary to it. Later on Osomari began to exploit its strategic location on a navigable stream leading out of the Niger into the Orashi river to develop a profitable trade with Okija, Ihiala, Oguta, and the Isuama Igbo group in the Orlu highlands. Also through the Orashi-Engenni waterway which bypassed Aboh, Osomari carried on trade with the Brass, Kalabari and Bonny delta states. This meant a loss to Aboh of revenue from trade tolls and, together with the upriver trade with its Igala kinsmen which siphoned a good part of Aboh's trade, brought wealth and power to Osomari at Aboh's expense. (R.N. Henderson, 1972, p. 68; I. Nzimiro, 1972, p. 17-18). In order to check the growing powers of a former tributary state Aboh mounted an invasion of Osomari which was successfully repulsed. An agreement was, therefore, reached by which Aboh and Osomari Traders visited the Asaba sandbank market on alternate weeks to avoid clashes. (N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/28740 op.cit., p.9). Another tradition states that the conflict was resolved in a treaty by which both parties agreed to work portions of the Niger in alternate years. (These traditions were recounted for me by Robert Olisa Nzewdegwu II (82 years) the Atamanya of Osomari interviewed on 27th December, 1979). This treaty was ritualised in the saying,

Aboh welu! Osomari welu!  
Ani nta aha ubu.

may be translated as 'when Aboh and Osomari have taken their shares of trade the smaller fry scramble for the left-over'.

In the 1830s M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield (1971, vol.1, p.395-6) reported that pirates from Onitsha, Asaba, and Anam often attached Aboh canoes going upriver; the most effective being those of the Anam who possessed large canoes. It was also at this time that the Asaba people killed an Aboh prince and Aboh mounted a punitive expedition in which two hundred prisoners were beheaded and their heads displayed at Aboh as a deterrent to future harassment. A better documented war was fought in the 1870s between Aboh and Anam. Intermittent attacks by Anam pirates had been accepted by the Aboh as part of the occupational risk involved in their trade with the Igala but this had become so intense that Aboh was virtually cut off from its northern markets. A fleet of war canoes was therefore sent against Anam, and in the ensuing battle, the Anam were completely routed and their general slain. It was after this battle that the Anam settlements of Ifite-Anam, Umuese-anam, and Ezi-Anam were moved further inland for safety from such strikes. (K.O. Ogedengbe, 1971, p.372; N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29576, p. 5-6).

The rise of Aboh as a major power brought her into competition with the older Idah kingdom which had previously dominated trade along the waterway. This apparently led to conflict as indicated in the traditions of Oguta (I. Nzimiro, 1972, p.14-16, 236-7), an Igbo town. According to this account the people of Oguta left the west Niger Igbo area as part of the Umuezechima migration of the mid. 17th century. They initially settled beside the Igala people on the bank of the Niger and after war in the late 17 or early 18th century, between the Igala and the Aboh had dragged on for a long time, their king, Obi Ogwuala was asked to arbitrate in the dispute. He accepted gifts but failed to mediate and was threatened by both sides. To avoid invasion the people of Oguta fell south along the Niger fighting many wars until they eventually settled, via the Orashi river, at their present site beside lake Oguta.

As already mentioned, it would seem that it was in order to avoid such conflict that a boundary market was established on a sandbank opposite Asaba, on the Niger marking the southern and northern limits of Igala and Aboh influence respectively, (W. Allen and T.R.M. Thompson, 1848, vol.2, p.271, vol. 2, p.4). During the rains when the river was high it was held on canoes moored close together. It was accessible to the numerous Igbo and Igala traders who had neither the capital nor the business contacts needed for trading expeditions into each other territory. As has been pointed out by R.N. Henderson this market was strategically situated at the meeting point of north-south riverain, and east-west overland routes with terminals at Onitsha and Asaba respectively. The Igala called this market Elanyi Ochili (a sandbank covered with temporary shelters); the Aboh called it Onya and the Onitsha Ubom. There were two other major markets of this kind along the Niger; the first was located at the border between the Aboh and Brass states at Onya, the second was on a sandbank forty-eight kilometres above Idah and was so called Ikiri by the Igala, and Bocquah or Iccory by European explorers. (M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield, 1971, vol.1, p.124-133). Along both banks of the Niger there were numerous local markets.

These major markets operated as periodic fairs and attracted merchants from distant places. The market at Ikiri was the biggest of the three, drawing upon the commerce of the Niger and Benue rivers, and was held every ten days. In the early nineteenth century it was attended on market days by more than six thousand people who included:

"Eboe (Aboh, and Attach (Igala), and even Bonny traders from the south and those from Egga, Cuttum Curaffe (Koton Kerifi) and Fundah (Pandah) on the north, besides great numbers from the interior country on both banks of the river". (M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield, 1971, vol.1. p.166).

About twenty-five large canoes each containing from forty to sixty people were reported to have sailed from the lower river to Ikiri every ten days, and in the same way Igala merchants travelled down to Aboh. For example in 1858 S.A. Crowther and J.C. Taylor (1859, p.392-7), were transported from Onitsha to Idah by a trading party belonging to Olumene, an Igala chief, which was returning from Aboh; The larger canoe carried forty-seven persons while the smaller one thirty-five. Also, M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield (1971, vol.2, p.167) were helped to get their grounded vessel afloat in Aboh by a party of fifty traders from Idah who were well armed with knives. All this attests to the fact that both the Igbo and Igala traders transacted business in each others home sections of the river; indeed Laird met Aboh traders, whom he calls the most enterprising and industrious traders on the Niger, as far north as Fundah (Pandah) north of the Niger-Benue Confluence.

What generally obtained was that owing to the capital required to purchase trade goods, canoes and labour to man the canoes, the long distance trade was limited to wealthy chiefs and rulers. (C.C. Ifemesia, 1959, p.20). More common were journies to one of the river bank markets or the boundary market opposite Asaba. In this type of trade fleets of canoes sailed from several points along the river and converged on the Asaba sandbank. In the 1830s M. Laird & R.A.K. Oldfield (1971, vol.2, p.178), gave a picturesque description of a flotilla of about three hundred Aboh canoes sailing to the boundary market at Asaba; the white cotton flags which they displayed gave the river "the appearance of a regatta", and this observed that the Niger carried "twice as much traffic... as in the upper parts of the Rhine, the whole population on the Niger being eminently of a commercial character.

Like the kingdom of Aboh in the south, the Idah kingdom strengthened its control of trade in the northern half of the lower Niger region. The early rise of the Igala kingdom as a political power and the establishment of its influence over the Nupe and Igbirra kingdoms enabled it to dominate trade while the geographical location of Idah was advantageous for control from the confluence southwards. This was noted by M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield, (1971, vol.1, p.125) that, "situated as it (Idah) is above the alluvial soil and at the entrance to the valley of the Niger, it commands at present the whole trade of the interior". The Ikiri sandbank market was even more favourably located for tapping the trade from the north, being nearer the Niger-Benue Confluence. It was estimated that in the early 19th Century about 11,400 slaves were sold annually at Ikiri, most of them from Nupe and Kakanda. The wealth derived by the Ata from his participation in this commerce enhanced his political influence, and he was described as "the most powerful (ruler) between the sea and Fundah (Pandah)" (M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield, 1971, vol.2, p.321-3). Igala control of the river commerce was vested in three subsidiary clans living on the river banks.

Their leaders bore the titles of Abokko Onukwu Ata, Agaidoko, and Omogbaje; Abokko Onukwu Ata was in charge of trade from Idah northwards; Agaidoko took charge of trade from Idah southwards; Omogbaje supervised trade at the Idah waterside. Relationships between the clans was often disturbed. (J.S. Boston, 1968, p.109-10).

To consolidate its control of trade, the Igala kingdom also engaged in raids on neighbouring towns and villages; for example in the 1830s Laird and Oldfield (1971, vol.1, p.148-50) reported that Igala canoes terrorised the inhabitants of the Niger-Benue Confluence area pillaging an enslaving communities. This area was a favourite raiding ground for the Igala chief Abokko. Almost every night of their stay in that section of the river they heard the shrieks of the victims of these attacks which extended up to Koton Kerifi. These raids on the loosely organised peoples along the Benue river were largely responsible for the sparse population of the area. (W. Allen, and T.R.H. Thompson, 1848, Vol.1, pp.378-9; W.B. Baikie, 1856, pp.290-1). It is also likely that the Igala purchased slaves from the peoples of the Benue valley such as the Alago, and Doma where local slave raids were common. (Oral information from Dr. A.C. Unomah). From the Igala town of Ogurugu on the Anambra river, raids were also mounted against the neighbouring Igbo and Igala communities as far as Onitsha and Asalgo. so as to dominate the trade in the area and to enslave the inhabitants. Traditions in these communities remember especially, the slave raids of Onojo Ogoni. Thus while Idah controlled trade in the northern half of the lower Niger, Ogurugu established its influence over the Anambra basin.

A large variety of commodities were distributed in the lower Niger trade region. Aboh, Osohari, and Oguta imported salt, textiles, locking glasses, beads, cowries, muskets and powder, from the delta. These goods were transported upriver to the Asaba sandbank market where they were exchanged for yams, castles, palm, oil, dogs, horses, ivory and slaves. With the increasing demand for slaves from mid-seventeenth century there was a corresponding rise in the trade in foodstuff, for such items as yams and palm oil were required for feeding the slaves during the trans-Atlantic voyages. R. and J. Lander (1832, vol.2, p.254) noted that most of the yams imported by Brass traders was sold to the European slave ships along the coast. Similarly, salt, much used for the purchase of slaves, was imported in greater quantity from the coastal states. Trona, an impure carbonate of soda, was in constant demand in all the markets from the upper parts of the Benue river. (W.B. Baikie, 1856, p.78).

Canoes, the sole means of transport on the Niger also constituted an important item of trade. The art of making canoes was widespread among the trading groups in the area but some groups produced large numbers of canoes expressly for sale, were famous for the durability of their products, or were specialist in the manufacture of large canoes. The Igala and the Aboh produced large numbers of canoes for sale, while, the Anam Igbo were noted for the durability and big size of their canoes. (F.E. Aniche (52 years) interviewed at Akiri-Atani on 27th December, 1979. Nupe traditions also state that they learnt the technique of building large canoes from the Igala. Alphonsus Ezeudu Idigo III, (64 years) interviewed at Aguleri on 22nd January, 1979). It would also seem that dogs were important among the livestock imported into the delta for consumption. W.B. Baikie (1856, p.317) wrote in 1854 that,

"There is a considerable traffic carried on at Abo in dogs, which are purchased at Idda, and are sold to supply

the delta of the river. The price of a large dog is usually one bag of salt, and of a small one, one piece (seven fathoms) of common calico".

By far the most important commodities in the lower Niger trade, in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century were slaves and ivory. As was indicated above most of the slaves reaching Aboh were purchased from the Igala, who in turn received their supplies from states in the Niger-Benue Confluence region as well as through their own raids. The Igala kingdom was also a major supplier of ivory of which there was an abundance. At Ikiri market tusks, some of them weighing forty-five kilograms, were cheaper than at Aboh where the demand was very high. (M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield 1971, vol.2, p.321-3). At Aboh it was used for the production of bangles, which were status symbols for wealthy women, and formed an important item in the regalia of titled men. W.B. Baikie (1856, p.49) noted that the price of a pair of ivory anklets in Aboh was equal to that for three slaves. This great demand for ivory at Aboh would account for Igala merchants selling tusk there. For example in 1832 Richard Lander (1832, vol.1, p.115) took on board the brother of the king of Damugoo (Adamugu), "who was on his way to the Aboh market with sixteen elephant teeth". Another source of ivory for Aboh merchants was the Anambra town of Aguleri which was a central market for the sale of ivory brought down by Igala, Awka, Anam and Ibaji, traders. Oral information by Ogolo Iwuoba (60 years) interviewed at Aguleri 22nd January, 1979. See also N.A.E., O.P. 1973 ONDIST 12/1/1324, p.21. N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/29576 op.cit. p.4, for the Anam; M. Laird, and R.A.K. Oldfield, 1971, vol.2, pp. 184-5, for the Ibaji elephant hunters.

The local slave trade along the Niger and its tributaries continued until very late in the nineteenth century in spite of its abolition on the high seas by the British government in 1807. When C. MacDonald (F.O.C.P. 5913 march 1890, p.3-4) travelled upriver in 1889 he noticed that "cargoes of slaves are brought down daily to a place called Igarrah Bank, opposite Onitsha, and are there sold by the Igarrahs to the Ibos". Part of the reason for the continuation of the human traffic was the development of palm oil production which was a labour intensive occupation. Slaves were also used to man the numerous canoes, as resident agents in the hinterland collection depots, as fighting men in the fiercely competitive trade, and as sacrifices on the death of prominent citizens. However, the number of slaves brought to the Asaba sandbank market had dropped significantly and according to MacDonald was about sixty-two per month.

For both the Igbo and the Igala the switch-over to palm oil trading was relatively easy because of its long established production for local consumption and trade. By the 1830s Aboh was reported to have attained "equal celebrity" for her production of palm oil as for her supply of slaves. (R. Lander and J. Lander, 1832, Vol.2, p.218). However, much of the oil sold at Aboh was bought from the hinterland markets of Isoko, Urhobo and Ukwuani, and Aboh really a collection depot (K.O. Ogedengbe, 1973, pp. 306-307; M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield, 1971, Vol.1, p.98. W.B. Baikie, 1856, p.300). Similarly, Idah and Ogurugu became collection centres for large quantities of palm oil from their hinterlands. From these ports oil was transported to Aboh for export through the delta traders; for example traders from Ndoni near Aboh travelled as far as Idah for oil which they brought down to Aboh to sell. Aboh-Igala involvement in the palm oil trade during the middle of the nineteenth century was summarised by S.A. Crowther and J.C. Taylor (1856 p.30) when they wrote that,

'Aboh people bring salt and other goods from the lower parts of the river as far as Igara, which are also taken to the confluence by the people of Idda, and are sold for cowries or ivory, and the cowries are brought to Onitsha market to purchase oil'.

Apart from barter as a method of commercial transaction, two types of currencies featured prominently in the Lower Niger trade, namely, salt and cowries. The use of salt as currency could have originated very early with the exchange of hinterland products for salt and dried fish from the delta and by the mid nineteenth century it had become a major currency. In 1854, W.B. Baikie (1856, p.78 and 317) observed that salt was in great demand at the Niger-Benue Confluence area for the purchase of firewood and slaves

"At Aboh, a great medium of barter is salt, which is brought up from Nimbe and from Bini, and is always in demand. Slaves are almost always purchased with salt, the price varying somewhat according to the condition of the market".

It is not certain when colonies were introduced as currencies in the Lower Niger trade. Contrary to K.O. Dike's assertion (1956, p.107) that cowries were introduced into the Niger Valley in the 1820s it would seem to have been used in Akwa from an earlier date. The Awka people possessed a sexagesimal system of enumeration specifically for cowries which was capable of counting 1,6000,000 units and M.D.W. Jeffreys (1938, p.221-6, 256) believed that cowries were introduced into Igboland from North Africa, Egypt being the most likely source. In Aboh cowries would appear to have been brought in from the Benin kingdom where they were in use before the arrival of the Portuguese. (A.F.C. Ryder, 1965, p.60-1). Thus, although European imports in the nineteenth century contributed to their wider circulation and depreciation, cowries had been in use in the Lower Niger for a long time. In the 1830s cowries were still a major currency on the Niger and according to M. Laird and R.A.K. Oldfield (1971, Vol.2, p.181) 'will purchase any article from Eboe [Aboh] to Boosa and passes current in every part of the interior'; Laird had to sell his goods for cowries in order to be able to purchase ivory and other commodities.

It is noteworthy that despite the ethnic diversity and different languages of the merchants along the Niger there was little or no communication problem. One reason for this situation was the use of Hausa language as a lingua franca for business transaction. Equally important was the remarkable flair of the traders for learning foreign languages, a fact which won the admiration of European explorers. According to W.B. Baikie, (1856, p.69),

'African traders are in general good and ready linguists, speaking not unfrequently three or four different tongues; the speed also with which they translate a sentence, without almost a moment's consideration is really surprising".

S.A. Crowther and J.C. Taylor (1859, p.394) who travelled with a party of Igala traders from Onitsha to Idah observed that they were fluent in the Igala, Igbo.

The 17th Century intensification of the flow of trade and traffic between the Igbo and the Igala generated significant commercial rivalry which took the form of establishing new settlements and attempting to wield influence in the older riverain communities.

From the Idah kingdom in the north, for example, the Igala chief Abdkko and his clansmen were credited with founding such riverain trading posts as Okparam, Ogbaru and Ute some of which were in Igbo territory and were bilingual in the Igbo and Igala languages. (W.B. Baikie, 1856, pp.290-94, M. Laird, and R.A.K. Oldfield, 1971, Vol.1, pp.114, 124). The older Igala fishing community at Onitsha also received substantial reinforcement in the first half of the eighteenth century resulting in the establishment of the Ogbeolu, Umuikem, and Obikporo quarters of the town. (S.I. Bosah, N.D. p.22; I. Nzimiro 1972, p.41). Similarly, the Umuoga quarter is Ocamari as well as Ogbeolou, Ukpologwu, and Asaga villages of Illah were later arrivals from Idah. More Igala emigrants came, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to establish Ilushi, and Inyele and Ebu on the River Otaw, the last two towns forming Igala-speaking enclaves in the western Igbo area. From the Igala town of Ogurugu new settlements were also founded down the Anambra river at Igga, Ojor, and Asaba.

Apart from the Idah and Aboh kingdoms other migrants established new settlements along the river banks or were absorbed into existing ones. For instance, the inhabitants of Okwe near Oko, Ukwumaga in Illah and Umunankwo and Ogbakuba are all said to have arrived from Benin. (N.A.I. CSO 26/28740 "Intelligence Report on the Riverain Villages of the Onitsha Division, Southern Section, Onitsha Province" (1933) by B.G. Stone pp. 6-10; D. Forde, and G.I. Jones, 1955, pp. 49-51). Although some of the settlements make references to turbulence in Benin kingdom as a cause for their migration, European eyewitnesses indicated that Benin traders visited the Asaba sandbank market through the overland routes. Some Benin traders may also have travelled up the Niger from the Forcados river through Aboh to the Niger markets. (W.Allen and T.R.H. Thompson, 1848, Vol. 1 p.270-1; W.B. Baikie, 1856, p.293). Other towns like Asaba, Anam on the Anambra river, and some communities in Nzam were settled by emigrants from Nri who were also attracted by the economic opportunity offered by the Niger trade. (For evidence about Nri settlements in Asaba see N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/30927 "Intelligence Report on the Asaba Clan, Asaba Division, Benin Province" (1936), by H. Vaux, pp. 6-8; for Anam see C.S.O. 26/29576 *op.cit.* pp. 5-6; for Nsam see C.S.O. 26/30712 *op.cit.* p.4. The result of all this was that both banks of the river soon carried a heavy population; Laird and Oldfield (1971, vol.1. p.163) estimated that there were upwards of forty towns and villages from Aboh at the apex of the Delta to the Niger-Benue Confluence, spaced at distances of two to five kilometres and having populations of one thousand each. This was in striking contrast with the sparse population along the banks of the river Benue which, relative to the Niger, carried less traffic, and had been ravaged by Igala slave raids.

European accounts reveal that in the nineteenth century the desire to maintain peace on the Niger which was vital for the free flow of commerce fostered close diplomatic relations between the trading states. In 1841 an incident took place which highlighted the level of co-operation that had been attained through mutual economic interests. In that year Alfred Carr, the West Indian Farm Superintendent of the 1841 British expedition disappeared in the course of a journey from Bonny to Lokoja on the Brass river and was never found. (J.F. Schon and S.A. Crowther, 1842, p.14-15).

The king of Aboh, Obi Ossai, was of the impression that King Boy of Brass was involved in the death of Mr. Carr and fearing a possible trade embargo determined to punish Brass. This would serve as a deterrent to future acts of violence on European trading agents, and demonstrably absolve him from implication in the tragedy. He solicited the co-operation of his major trading partner, the Ata of Idah, and Richards, (J.F. Schon and S.A. Crowther, 1842, p.39) reported that,

...King Obi of Abo had sent to inform the Atta of Igara of the conduct of the inhabitants of the Delta, who had killed the white man coming to establish trade with the upper country, and that something must be done to keep the road open for free communication between them and the white men.

Since the Ata did not possess enough fighting men for the expedition, he transmitted the message to king Massaba of Nupe "as one concerned in the matter and powerful enough to keep the road open". King Massaba promptly despatched a formidable force of cavalry and infantry who camped at the model farm where they were joined by the Igala and Kakanda fighting units. They were compelled to retreat after reaching Adamugu, however, for fear of heavy losses in men and horses which could have resulted from fighting in unfamiliar swampy terrain. (W.B. Baikie, 1856, p.302).

It was also the mutual concern for peace along the Niger that explains the mediation in 1854 by the king of Aboh in the dispute between the Igala clans of Abdkko and Agaidko who were in charge of the river trade in Igala territory. The relations between these two clans were fiercely competitive and quite often resulted into open hostility. In 1854 a serious clash occurred between them at the Asaba sandbank market in which several people were killed. The king of Aboh despatched Orise [Olisa] and Aje, members of the royal family, as emissaries to effect reconciliation but they proved unsuccessful and the conflict continued with destructive effects at Idah. Some of its inhabitants were forced to flee to more secure localities and parts of the town were reportedly deserted and overgrown with bush. In addition the Igala market at Ikiri was discontinued and new markets were set up which contributed to the decline of the Igala kingdom. (W.B. Baikie, 1856, p.268, 281-2,

Equally important in promoting political co-operation along the Niger was a common ideological belief among the rulers of trading states that they were all related. According to R.N. Henderson, (1971, p.71) there was an

'ideological conviction held in common by the rulers of both Igala and Aboh that they share ultimate descent from Ado/Idu peoples through Benin'.

Indeed, an Igala chief bearing the title of Galadima told W.B. Baikie (1856, p.286-7) that Ado was the original home of the kings of Igala, Benin, Aboh, and then from Idah the kings of Nupe and Pandah. Such traditions generated a political climate that was conducive to commercial activities since the major ethnic groups involved in the transaction regarded themselves as kinsmen.

The trading system of the Igbo-Igala borderland away from the rivers.

The changes in this Eastern Zone trading system were not as dramatic as those along the Niger for a number of reasons. In the first place the overland trade routes were more diverse than the route along the Niger. This meant that there was no such rivalry as was noticeable along the waterway. Nevertheless, the Igala community of Ogurugu carried out raids in the borderland both to enslave and to dominate the trade routes. Secondly, most of the overland trade routes were linked to the Niger at various points and thus served as its feeder routes for the use of canoes on the river ensured that a larger volume of commodities could be transported than was possible on the overland routes by human portage. In addition the evidence is poorer because we do not have eye-witness accounts of the trading life of this borderland to compare with those available for the Niger in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, there were changes in the land trading and although the previous groups such as the Awka and Nri from the south, and the Igala and Nupe from the north continued as major traders, it would appear that the requirements of the overseas trade led to an increase in the number of merchants. This external stimulus also provided the incentive for the traders to travel longer distances, thus developing the pattern of trade routes, so that in place of the previous relay system of trade there emerged well-defined long distance routes. Among the Awka overseas trade was a major factor in the evolution of trading territories assigned to specific villages. This eliminated competition and ensured a wider coverage and more effective participation in the distributive trade of the region. Furthermore, the overseas trade gave rise to the movement of Aro merchants from the south to parts of northern Igboland. Although the Aro were not as active in Igala land as they were in Idoma land, their appearance in northern Igboland inspired some Igbo traders from the Nsukka and Nike areas, to travel into the Igala kingdom to procure the commodities required by the Aro; these acted as trading agents for the Aro in parts of Igboland and Igala country.

As was previously argued, the development of the Atlantic slave trade engendered major north south trade routes inland. It is not definite when these routes began, but it is most probable that they had attained a stable pattern in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, when the stimulus of overseas trade had made a significant impact in the hinterland. Two major trade routes, starting from Bende where there was an Arochukwu trade fair, ran northwards through the centre of Igboland into the Igala and Idoma countries. The first route went in a northwesterly direction through Uzuakoli, Okigwe, Nike, to Ogurugu and Idah. The second route went in a northeasterly direction through Akaeze to Uburu, where the Arochukwu organised another trade fair, to Nkalagu, Ezza, and beyond. An east-west route connected Nike and Nkalagu thus linking the northwestern and northeastern trade route. From Bende these two routes extended southwards, one diverging southeastwards through Ohaffia, Arochukwu, to Itu on the Cross river and then to Calabar. The other went through the Ngwa area to Akwete and then to Opobo and other delta states. (For a description of the overland trade routes see S. Ottenberg, 1958, pp. 304-308, and the map on p. 300; W.R.G. Horton, 1954, pp.311-313; A.E. Afigbo, 1977 pp. 118, 125-126).

It was at Nsukka that two major routes from Igboland were connected to the trade routes in the Igala country. The northwestern trade route from Bende traversed Nike and Akuk to Nsukka from where it radiated in three main

directions. The first linked Nkpologwu, and Nimbo to the Igala town of Ogurugu on the Anambra river, and from there connected Ibaji to Idah; the second route went through Adoru, Egabada, Oforachi to Idah; the third route joined Ibeagwa Aka, an important market centre, to Akpanya, Angba, Ejule (where there was a horse fair), and then on through Ayangba to Dekina and finally to Oguma on the Benue river. This appears to have been the major route for the supply of horses from Hausaland and the Nupe country as well as natron and salt brought down the Benue river from the Jukun kingdom. From Ejule two routes ran west to Idah and Itobe, both on the Niger.

The northeastern trade route from Bende also reached Nsukka through Eha Amufu and so linked it to the northwestern routes from Igboland. Two further important trade routes connected Nsukka with northeastern Igala country. The first route branched through Enugu Ezike, to Ogugu, Ankpa, Awulu, Abejukolo and then to Amagedde on the Benue river. The second route passed through Akpanya to Ejule from where it went northeastwards to Ayangba, Iyalo, Abejukolo and Amageddo. These two routes were connected by a transverse route from Ankpa through Lafia and Egume to Ayangba. There were many subsidiary tracks which connected the major routes or acted as feeder routes linking them with neighbouring towns and villages and also a maze of dry season pathways. These linked the Anambra river basin Igbo towns of Anam, Aguleri, Igbariam, and Omo to the Ibaji Igala group and led from there northwards to Idah. Thus the overland trade routes criss-crossing the Igbo and Igala territories were connected to the Lower Niger waterways at Itobe, Onitsha, Asaba and Osomari on the Niger, and Ogurugu on the Anambra river. This outline of the trade routes in the Igbo-Igala borderland was worked out from oral evidence collected from Igbo and Igala elders during fieldwork in January, 1979.

From Igbo and Igala traditions the most important traders on the overland routes were Igala and Nupe from the north and Nri and Awka from the south. From the second half of the eighteenth century Nike, Arochukwu and some Nsukka communities in the south also became important traders. The qualification of these groups to be considered as major traders being based on their numerical strength along the land routes, the volume of trade goods they transported, and the distances they covered.

Nri travellers relied upon an underlying principle which fostered relations between them and the Igala; that both groups were descendants of one ancestral progenitor called Eri. This ensured unfettered access for itinerant Nri ritualists to Igala country and during their journeys into Igala country, they took with them cotton, white clay (nzu), used for ritual purposes, ritual staves (oji), ankle cords (akali), for Ibaji Igala ozo titled men, and ekpili (rattles) which the Igala used in their music. In return they brought back, in payments for their services, livestock such as fowls and goats, brass rods (mkpo ona), ivory, beads (aka), horse tails (nza), a wide variety of Igala textile goods, elephant hair necklaces (akia) used by women, and mats. Some of the brass rods were taken home and sold to the Awka blacksmiths for the manufacture of leg bangles (nja) for women. While some of these goods were transported home and used in paying tribute to the Eze Nri, some were exchanged in transit for other Igbo products in communities through which Nri ritualists passed. (Oral account from Nwankwo Uliagba (78 years), Okeke Okonkwo (75 years), and Festus Tabansi (54 years) interviewed at Agukwu Nri on 23rd January, 1979).

The other Igbo group that featured prominently in the commercial exchanges through the land routes was the Awka blacksmiths. Their

production of good iron farming tools such as hoes, diggers, and matchets ensured a high demand for their goods and services in the predominantly agricultural communities. Blacksmiths were welcomed in most towns and villages, and, with their tool kits as identification, enjoyed unmolested peregrination through the Igbo and Igala countries and beyond. Their long distance contacts and acceptance by alien communities afforded the blacksmiths and their kinsmen opportunities for the development of other crafts. According to C.K. Meek, (1937, p.18),

'They formed a close guild and travelled extensively as smiths, doctors, surveyors of cults and cultus symbols, circumcisers, teeth-filers, missionaries of the priest-chiefs of Nri, and above all as agents of the oracle of Agbala, which was a final court of appeal in all disputes'.

It is not possible to be specific about the date when the Awka blacksmiths began to serve the Igala country but that this connection may have an ancient root could be discerned from the close relationship between the Umueri towns, particularly the Nri and the Awka community.

In the Awka community it was the Agulu section that were the blacksmiths. They had learnt the skills from their original home, Agbaja in the Udi area, where there existed a smithing tradition. The Agulu section in turn was divided into seven groups or quarters, with fairly well-defined occupational zones. The Umubele and Umuogbu quarters for example undertook tours among the Anambra river basin Igbo communities, the Igala and Idoma countries. Thus travelled in troupes and were away for about six months, which meant that while some were away, some stayed at home to protect the community. According to one Awka blacksmith, on their way to Igala country they passed through the towns of Okpunc, Amanuke, Achala, Igbariam, Anaku, Omo, Ifite-Ogwari, Umueje, to Ogurugu an Igala town. From Ogurugu they went on to Idah, Ojoko, and finally to the market town of Ejule. It was from Ejule that the smiths dispersed to various towns and villages in Igala land where they settled temporarily and practised their craft. Some smiths desiring to travel further north were transported by canoes up the river Niger to Lokoja and even the Nupe country. (The seven groups or quarters called Agulu ebo n'asak are Umubele, Umuanaga, Umuogbu, Umuike, Umujagwo, Umuenechi, and Umueruka. Oral accounts by Nwokoye Nonyelu (90 years), a veteran blacksmith also called NwokoyeIdah on account of his past itinerary in the Igala country, interviewed 3rd January, 1980 at Awka. Nwokoye Nonyelu, 3rd January, 1980 and Obuora Nebe (60 years) the ruler of Awka interviewed 2nd January, 1980 at Awka).

A variety of metal goods were produced and marketed in Igala land by the Awka smiths. These included farming implements such as iron, hoes, diggers and matchets, ritual staves for Igala priests, gongs, axes, arrow heads, small iron pieces which the Igala call aba egin and which were used by their medicine men and bronze bells. These were purchased by the Igala with brass rods (mkpo ona) which were used as currency on the inland routes. They were U-shaped and were worth about six-pence in the early part of this century. As with the ritualists, some of the brass rods were carried home and used in the manufacture of leg bangles (nja) for young women, with the rest they purchased Igala products, slaves, ivory, textiles, coral beads (aka), leather goods, and potash (mmu akanwu). These commodities were headloaded by slaves to Awka. On arrival at Awka the slaves were sold to the smiths of the Umuanaga and Umujagwo quarters of Agulu (whose

occupational zone included the riverain Igbo communities called Olu) or taken to the Delta and sold to Ijo merchants. The smiths took back European manufactured goods which were distributed further north into Igala land by Umubele and Umuogbu smith during their next itinerary. (Nwokoye Nonyelu (90 years), 3rd January, 1980).

Most of the other commodities purchased from the Igala were sold for cowries which was the currency in Awka and which financed title-taking ceremonies, house building, and bride-price payments. In this way the Awka community amassed wealth which was clearly visible to foreign visitors. According to N.W. Thomas (1913, Part 2 p.13) who visited the town in 1913;

'...Awka was, and still is, far richer than the majority of its neighbours, as is evident from the fact that the men who possessed two or more wives are three times as numerous as those who possess only one'.

Oral traditions in some parts of Igala land and Igboland, (Peter A. Achema (51 years) the Achadu of Igala, Ainoko Adebo (40 years), Awulu Ata (50 years) interviewed 4th January, 1979 at Idah) associate Awka visitors with slave dealing and this would seem to show that with the increasing volume of trade the blacksmiths invested their earnings in slaves.

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries some other Igbo groups had joined the Nri and Awka as long distance traders. The appearance of these new merchants may have been stimulated by the success of the Nri and Awka and by the rapid expansion in the volume of lucrative trade which was an incentive for more professional traders to emerge. Furthermore, the penetration of the Arochukwu traders into Eha Amufu and the Nsukka area brought about an increase in the tempo of commercial activities. The Aro brought vast quantities of European manufactured articles which impelled communities to range far afield to procure exchange goods for the purchase of (Stanislaus Nwamba (80 years) interviewed at Eha Alumona 17th January, 1980).

Among the new group of long distance traders were the Nike who according to W.R.G. Horton (1954, p. 311) became "the principal slave traders in northern Iboland". Nike was strategically located at the cross-roads of three major trade routes which linked it with Ogurugu and Idah to the northwest, the Cross river Igbo to the east, and Awka and Bende to the south. As the slave trade became profitable the Nike raided surrounding towns and villages, and a substantial proportion of the slaves they captured were sold to the Igala and Idoma in exchange for horses and cattle. The former were resold to the Cross river Igbo for their horse-title-taking ceremonies and burial rites. Slaves, horses and cattle were also sold to the Aro traders in large numbers in exchange for European goods and salt brought from the Delta. The Awka also purchased slaves and horses from the Nike for redistribution to other parts of Igboland and the Delta. But the Aro remained the major trading partners of the Nike who thus became their northern agents. Aro mercenaries were also readily available to the Nike who engaged them in some of their military expenditures.

Oral traditions at Nsukka indicate that most of the local groups participated in the trade between the Igala and the Igbo. Like the Nike, many of them operated in close partnership with Aro long distance traders and the Aro had, by the second half of the eighteenth century, penetrated into Eha Amufu importing large quantities of European goods. Since Eha

Amufu became a major centre through which exotic items reached the Nsukka area, the town came to be known as Isi Uzo (the Gateway). In response to Aro demands more traders from Enugu Ezike, Eha Alumona, Nibo and Aku appeared on the trade routes. (Oral account by Nathaniel Ugwu (50 years), Joseph Ozhiko (45 years), and Chukwuma Ozhiko (55 years) interviewed at Nsukka 7th January, 1979).

As various Igbo groups went north into Igalaland so also did Igala, Nupe and Idoma groups travel southwards into Igboland. This movement of Igala and Nupe merchants is generally associated with the long established north-south horse trade. Many of the horses taken south by the Igala came from Nupe, which nineteenth century European accounts (R. and J. Lander 1832, Vol.2, p.312-3) credited with possessing a prodigious number of excellent horses. Indeed some Nsukka informants stated that it was the Nupe who first introduced horses into their area. However, the Igala seem subsequently to have assumed a commanding role in the trade. Horses were also purchased by the Igala from Hausa merchants who brought them in large numbers across the river Benue to Oguma. (Oral evidence by John Unubi Onoji (72 years), 5th January, 1979; See also NAK SNP 10: 30P/1919 "Bassa Komo District Report", by F.F.N. Byng-Hall, p.12; P.E. Okwoli, op.cit. p. 24 and footnote 1). These horses were assembled at Ejule, the commercial hub of Igala kingdom, whence trade routes radiated like spokes on a wheel. It was from the horse fair at Ejule that the Igala brought horses to Ibeagwa in Ibola where there was a smaller horse fair and from Ibeagwa Igala traders and their Igbo partners distributed horses to other parts of Iboland. Some horses were also brought into Igboland through Enugu Ezike by the Idoma. (Oral account by John Asogwa (70 years) interviewed at Ibeagwa 9th January, 1979. Oral account by Chief Raymond Uroko Eyida (68 years) interviewed at Enugu Ezike 17th January, 1979; See also NAK SNP 10: 16p/1921 "Munishi Province - Okwoga Division Assessment Report" (1921) by N.J. Brooke, p.31). The fact that horses which were in high demand in parts of Igboland were brought by the Igala made them one of the most important and active trading groups along the land routes. However, with increasing demand for horses in the early part of the nineteenth century Nsukka traders began to visit Ejule to purchase them instead of waiting for the arrival of Igala merchants and many of the slaves that left Nsukka went in exchange for horses. It was estimated that about eight to ten slaves were exchanged for a horse. (Chief Raymond Uroko Eyida (68 years, 17th January, 1979). He also stated that the horses were used for title taking ceremonies, Ogbuanyinya, and for the funeral rites of prominent citizens.

It must be emphasised that slaves moved south and north for, as was previously stated, the Awka smiths brought slaves from the Igala country and other Igbo communities like Enugu Ezike, Obukpa, Nsukka and Edem bought slaves when they began to travel north. The Igala themselves also marched some slaves southwards for sale in Igboland. One important determinant for the movement of slaves was the desire to take the victims away from familiar environments. It would seem, however, that initially more slaves went northwards into Igala country from Igboland then southwards, but with the penetration of Aro merchants to Nsukka a greater proportion of the slaves were sold to them and some local merchants began to accompany the Aro to the Delta region.

One other reason why Igala moved South in substantial numbers was in the practise of their cloth-dyeing crafts. Among the northern Igbo the weaving industry was most developed in the Nsukka communities where cloth was produced in large quantities but the absence of dyeing experts created

job opportunities for the Igala who had both a flourishing weaving and a well-developed dyeing industry. Many Igala cloth-dyers resided in various Nsukka communities, dyeing yarn or finished cloth. (Oral account by David Ugwuoke (80 years), Mrs. Jemima Ugwuoke (70 years), and Chief Dennis Ezenweze (46 years) interviewed at Obimo 13th January, 1979).

Some of the textile products from Nsukka were even purchased by Igala merchants and sold as far north as the Niger-Benue Confluence.

The overland routes between the Igbo and the Igala was well organized to meet the demands of both short distance and long distance traders. Transportation was by human portage, and slaves served as carriers. With the exception of horses and slaves, who were self-transporting, all commodities had to be headloaded from one market to the other. Travelling along the paths was a hazardous venture and traders moved in troupes and were armed for protection. (See for example the evidence from the eighteenth century Igbo slave Equiano, (O. Equiano, 1967, p.20). Owing to the long distances involved in travelling to the bigger markets, it was imperative to have secure over night resting places along the routes. Consequently trade settlements were planted along the routes, or business alliances established with prominent families through covenants, or more commonly through intermarriages which broadened kinship connection over a wider geographical area. These constraints limited long distance trade to wealthy individuals who could purchase enough goods and slaves to fit out major trading expeditions, or to groups whose services and occupations conferred on them immunity from attack. The easiest form of trade was that in which large numbers of Igbo and Igala trekked to the borderland markets on specific market days and returned home in the evening. The number of such borderland markets is a testimony of the liveliness of the commercial life of the area; on the Igala side there were markets at Aburuge, Adoru, Akpanya, Ogugu and Ogurugu and on Igbo side at Okpuje, Unadu, Itchi, Ibeagwa and Enugu Ezike. One common feature that simplified commercial relations was the possession of a four-day market cycle by both groups with similar names. In Igbo the four market days of the week were called Eke, Oye, Afor and Nkwo in that order, while in Igala they are Eke, Ede, Afor and Nkwo. (The substitution of Igala Ede for Igbo Oye may have arisen because of linguistic modification). Both also had bigger markets every eight days to give time for the arrival of merchants from distant places and also to encourage the assemblage of a wider variety of trade items.

Much of the trade on the routes was carried on by barter but there were two important currencies, brass rods and cowries. The use of brass rods was much more widespread in Igala land and the Nsukka area, while cowries were in circulation in the Onitsha and Awka Igbo environs. Less important currencies were salt cones and iron arrows. The salt was moulded into cones of different sizes and imported from the Benue region or Uburu salt lake in Igboland; it was used for very small purchases; cowries and brass rods served for larger purchases. There was also an iron currency of small arrow-shaped pieces with long tails which the Igbo called umumu. Different sub-types of this currency were in circulation over a wide area of Nigeria including the Benue region and as far north as Katagum near Kano. (C.K. Meek, 1937, p. 104 and 1931, p.452.) This apparently was the currency described by Equiano when he wrote of small pieces of coin that "are made something like an anchor". (O. Equiano, 1967, pp. 6-7). W.B. Baikie (1856, p.114-5, 416-7) believed that its use pre-dated the introduction of cowries in the area.

On the overland trade routes the developments closely paralleled those on the waterways. Igbo craftsmen and traders and their Igala counterparts competed along the trade routes. From Igboland Nri ritualists and Awka smiths formed bases to practise their skills. In this way Nri settlements were established in the Ibaji section of Igala kingdom and were scattered all through the Ibaji communities of Aike, Enweli, Unale and Odeke; they are collectively known as Nri Olu which means 'Nri of the floodplains'. (Oral account by Nwankwo Uliagba, (78 years), Okoye Nwankwe (80 years), and Festus Tabansi (54 years) interviewed at Agukwu Nri on 23rd January, 1979).

Similarly Awka blacksmiths from the Umuogbu and Umubele quarters of Agulu settled in Igala towns and villages for six month periods plying their trade. They established business alliances with influential Igala citizens who provided them with hostel facilities and constructed the workshops where they practised their occupation. The prolonged stays in Igala country and close intermingling with Igala families enabled many of the blacksmiths to marry Igala wives and settle in their host communities. (Nwokoye Nonyelu (90 years), 3rd January, 1980 and Obuora Nebe (60 years), 2nd January, 1980).

With the appearance at Nsukka of Igbo long distance traders, the number of Igbo travelling into Igala country increased significantly, especially, in the nineteenth century. For the traders from these communities, who lacked the conventional immunity possessed by the Nri and Awka specialist groups, the need for marriage alliances and covenants for protection and the advancement of their business was crucial. It is still remembered that in passing through alien lands in those days you had to know the names of influential men you could mention if challenged en route or else you would be kidnapped as an intruder and sold off. That was also why the Nsukka groups gave their daughters in marriage to the Igala for, according to one elder, "women are used to clear and maintain the passage of communication in foreign land" (Oral account by David Ugwoke (80 years) Ezenweze (46 years), interviewed at 13th January, 1979 at Obimo). Like the Awka and Nri groups the Nsukka Igbo traders also established settlements in Igala towns where they collected Igala commodities and which also served as resting places. Examples of such settlements were in Afulugo, Akpanya, Adoru, Ejule, Ajaka, Ochadam and Allomo and it is significant that many of these places were important market towns. (Oral account by Nathaniel Ugwu (50 years), Chukwuma Oshioke (55 years) interviewed at Nsukka on 7th January, 1979).

From the north, Igala traders and cloth dyers penetrated many towns and villages in the Nsukka region where they settled and plied their trades. The fact that the Igala supplied luxury commodities such as horses, beads and European manufactured goods, together with their usefulness as cloth dyers in an area where cloth weaving was a thriving industry meant that they were welcome in most of the Nsukka communities. Traditions in this area show that such towns as Okpuje, Unadu, Itchi, Nsukka, Obino, Nkpologwu, Enugu Ezike, Ibweagwa and Opi contained Igala settlers and an idea of the duration of some of the settlements could be perceived from Enugu Ezike where the family of Ezenwadama an Igala trader, records a genealogical depth of six generations. (Oral account by Chief Raymond Uroko Eyida (68 years) interviewed at Enugu Ezike on 17th January, 1979). The Igala also intermarried with the Igbo neighbours among whom they settled.

The overseas slave trade thus took the commercial relations between the Igbo and the Igala to new heights. There was a significant increase in the volume of trade, which in turn led to changes in the pattern of trade routes and the emergence of long distance traders that traversed both areas through

the waterways and land routes. New settlements were established and older communities received new immigrants from both areas. The new trade also generated new trends in the political relationships between the two groups. In view of the fact that the political relationships between them have been given a prominent place in the existing literature it will form the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### TRENDS IN POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Atlantic slave trade brought about new trends in the political relations between the Igbo and the Igala. Before the new trade reached its peak in the eighteenth century the relations between the two groups were essentially peaceful. As was previously indicated, the ritualists of the priest-king of Nri in Igboland had religious and political influence in Idah, and The Achadu, the head of the Igbo elements in the Igala kingdom, was an important official. However, with the expansion of trade on the Niger some states located along this waterway and its tributaries, notably Aboh, Osomari and Idah, because of their controlling influence in the commerce, grew prosperous and powerful. Their desire to capture more slaves for export and domestic services, and to control the trade routes, led them to raid their neighbours. This disrupted the former pattern of political relations between the trading states and their neighbours. These raids were not always state controlled but were carried out by individuals who had grown wealthy and powerful through their participation in trade and were not under the control of the rulers of their communities. The Igbo-Igala borderland was particularly affected by their frequent raids and counter raids.

Traditions in the Igala country and the northern part of Igboland show that in the mid 17th century warfare featured prominently. According to these accounts Onojo Ogboni, an Igala warlord, carried out far-ranging and devastating raids in parts of both the Igbo and Idoma borderlands from his military base at Ogurugu on the Anambra river. Some versions of this tradition insist that these attacks also affected parts of the Igala country, particularly the Ibaji section in the Anambra river basin. Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella (Agu Onoja) and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979; See also N.A.E. OP 398/1926 ONPROF 7/12/122 "Legends of Onojo Ogboni of Ogurugu. Extract from Notes on Kabba Province", and Appendix No. 1, "Legends on Onoja Ogboni" enclosed in the same file. It is important to bear in mind that attacks by Onojo Ogboni affected parts of the Igala country too. The neglect of this aspect of the traditions has distorted the interpretation by some writers about the causes of these raids and their probable consequences. At Onitsha Onojo Ogboni is said to have raided the town for slaves during the reign of Obi Aroli and carried away the king's daughter Usse in marriage (R.N. Henderson 1972, p.86-90). Igala traditions add that such canoe-borne attacks through the Anambra river also extended to Asaba. (J.S. Boston, 1962, p.54; Researches by E. Isichei do not corroborate the Igala account. See Isichei, E., 1969, p.433, and See also N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/30927 "Intelligence Report on the Asaba Clan, Asaba Division, Benin Province", (1936) by H. Vaux pp. 6-8, Illah traditions also narrate that an Igala warrior called Olu Izah raided the town and carried people away into slavery. He was subsequently killed by a Benin nobleman called Edaiken, which was corrupted into Daike in Igbo language. In appreciation for this achievement Daike was appointed the Iyase of the town and the head of Ukwumaga quarter. Oral account by A.I. Nwulu (60 years) interviewed at Illah on 28th December, 1979. In Aguleri town, also situated on the Anambra river, the elders told M.D.W. Jeffreys in

1930 that,

...there are trenches (ekpe) that encircle Obuga and these trenches we are told by our fathers were dug by the Igala in the old days as a protection against the Igbo. In this trench people took refuge when an attack began. Afterwards the Igala went away and today their nearest town is Umunkiti a whole day's journey on foot, walking from morning till night. (NAE Ep 8766 CSE 1/85/4596 689. Obuga is a village square and ritual centre in Aguleri believed to have been the dispersal point for the descendants of Eri the progenitor of the Umeri group and the Igala. For other accounts of Igala attacks on Aguleri see Idigo, M.C.M., pp. 5-9; NAI CSO 26/28323, p.6-7).

Eastwards on the Nsukka escarpment, there are widespread traditions of Onojo Ogboni attacks from Ogurugu. C.K. Meek (1930 paragraph 7) who collected some of these traditions had this to say:

Though there is little traditional evidence of direct contact with Ida it is admitted that most of the Nsukka Division was at one time (how long ago cannot now be determined) overrun by an Igala raider known as Onu (Chief) Ojo Ogboyi. This person is reputed to have been the son of an Ata of Ida and to have devastated the whole of the Okpoto country, carrying off many of the inhabitants to serve him as soldiers or slaves. He settled eventually at Ogurugu, which he fortified and used as a centre for raiding the surrounding Ibo villages. His attacks penetrated as far south as Opi. He is said to have been a giant with six fingers and six toes, and to have died at Ogurugu.

Igala and Igbo traditions also attribute supernatural powers to Onojo Ogboni, a mythification that makes him an even more elusive figure for the historian. (R.S.Seton, 1928, p. 267; N.A.E. OP 398/1926 ONPROF 7/13/122, pp. 1-4). Other supernatural feats credited to Onojo Ogboni include the uprooting of a silk cotton tree which he planted upside down; stepping on rocks and leaving his footprints on them; an unsuccessful attempt to stop the flow of the river Niger. Onjo Ogboni's exploits could have compared with those attributed to the Benin warrior king, Oba Ewuare; or the giant of Unyamwezi who trained Mirombo in the techniques of warfare which enabled him to withstand the Arabs. In the case of Unyamwezi it is evident that the giant was a symbolic reference to the Ngoni. For these examples see J. Egharevba (19.60 pp.13-17; A.C. Unomoh, 1972, pp.243-4).

One intractable question that arises from these traditions is whether Onojo Ogboni was an actual historical personality or a mythical figure. At Ogurugu he is said to have been the illegitimate son of Obatamu from his union with Oboli, an Idah woman whom he met during hunting trip. When Onojo Ogboni grew up in Idah he was ridiculed by his peers as a bastard and on inquiry from his mother he was told that his father lived in Ogurugu. He, therefore, left for Ogurugu where he lived and from where he ravaged the surrounding towns taking captives who formed the population of the seven quarters of Ogurugu. Other versions of this tradition relate he was powerful and self-willed and Idah elders, with his mother advised him to

emigrate to Ogurugu his father's hometown. At Idah Onojo Ogboni is said to have been related to the royal family through his mother which disqualified him as a candidate to the throne his mother Oboli or Obudali, was the sister of Ebule Jaunu the first Ata of Idah. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979; see also N.A.E. OP 398/1926 ONPROF 7/13/122 *op. cit.* pp. 1.4. Onojo Ogboni's boyhood experiences were similar to those of Shaka the Zulu, the nineteenth century Bantu leader of South Africa. See J.D. Omer-Cooper, 1966, pp. 29-30.)

Onojo Ogboni's genealogical connection with the first Ata of Igala while it may validate his historicity, poses more problems. If he is associated with an expansionist phase of the Igala kingdom of Idah, as the traditions seem to portray, there is anachronism in the traditions. This is because Igala traditions associate the beginning of the kingdom's expansion with Ayegba on Idoko (the fourth ruler after Ebule Jaunu) whose reign has been assigned to the late seventeenth century. The Ogboni traditions do not make reference to the reign of Idoko who belonged to the same generation as Onojo Ogboni. Again the first rulers of the Igala kingdom, including Ebule Jaunu, Agenapoje and Idoko belong to the semi-mythical stage of the state's development that pose the usual chronological problems (J.S. Boston, 1969, p. 29-43). Thus it is not only difficult to establish the approximate date of Onojo Ogboni's existence through his genealogy, Igala traditions about the kingdom's military expansion would appear to be at variance with the genealogy itself. Some accounts assert that Onojo Ogboni was an Ata of Idah but there is no such name in the various Igala kinglists. (N.A.E. 398/1926 ONPROF 7/13/122 *op. cit.* p. 3). One is inclined to wonder whether there were not more than one Onojo Ogboni operating from different centres in the Igala kingdom, namely, Idah and Ogurugu. A more probable conclusion is that Onojo Ogboni tales symbolise Igala raids into Idoma country for Idah, and similar raids into Igboland from Ogurugu. It is also probable that Onojo Ogboni was an outstanding warrior who took part in these raids and whose name has, therefore, been preserved by traditions. In some ways Onojo Ogboni can be likened to such recent adventurers as Bayero in the northern Benue basin, and Dan Karo in the south, who raided the surrounding areas between 1870-1890. Dan Karo founded a settlement at Jangarigari from where he terrorised Wukari and neighbouring villages. (Personal communication from Dr. A.C. Unomh).

From the traditions in Igboland there is a clear reference to Ogurugu as the springhead of Igala forays into the various communities, and there is no mention of Idah. This would also account for the absence of traditions of raids in Igboland at Idah. J.S. Boston (1969 p.57) who at Idah investigated Onojo Ogboni's relationship with the Nsukka Igbo remarked that,

In Igala tradition concerning relations with the Nsukka Igbo villages, the part played by Onoja Oboni in their conquest is recognised, but overshadowed in interest by the role of the Ashadu, as the Ata's chief representative in the area.

It is important to note that Igbo and Igala traditions do not associate The Ashadu with military activities and the Ashadu clan itself does not possess any tradition of military clashes between them and the Nsukka Igbo. However, there is still the possibility that Ogurugu's attacks on the Igbo communities were directed and co-ordinated from Idah which would make Onojo Ogboni the Ata's general and Ogurugu, Idah's southern military outpost.

The evidence at our disposal seems to contradict this viewpoint and in my fieldwork in Idah also failed to throw up any traditions of Igala raids from the capital.

Onojo Ogboni is stated by Igala traditions to have ravaged parts of the Igala kingdom; this is not in keeping with a co-ordinated attack from Idah, and conveys the impression of an Igala warrior who had run amuck and assailed towns and villages irrespective of whether they were Igala or not. At Ogurugu the elders stated that the Ukwaja and Ofuegbe quarters of the town were settled by captives taken by Onojo Ogboni from the Ibaji section of the Igala country. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979). Secondly, there are other traditions about Onojo Ogboni and Ogurugu that portray this community as a semi-autonomous principality on the fringes of Igbo and Igala countries. In 1854, for example, W.B. Baikie (1856 p.291) recorded that,

Not far from Adamugu is a town named Onuja, which was built by the son of a former Atta, who was compelled to leave Iddah, being too fond of thinking and acting for himself.

The location of the town agrees with that of Ogurugu and the self willed nature of its founder tallies with the traditions about Onojo Ogboni. Besides, the rulers of Ogurugu bear the title Agu Onoja (the lion of Onoja) after Onojo Ogboni, and it is possible that Baikie's informants mistook the title for the town's name.

The semi-autonomous status of Ogurugu is further reinforced by all accounts given by the elders at Ogurugu. They stated that,

Onojo Ogboni grew up at Idah to be a restless and over-mighty subject of the Ata of Igala. He was, therefore, advised by his mother's kinsmen to emigrate to Ogurugu his father's hometown. Before he left, however, Onojo Ogboni brought out the Ofo. symbol of political authority which he split into two equal halves. He gave one half to the Ata for ruling Idah and travelled with the other half to Ogurugu where he became the king. He further gave an injunction that the rulers of both communities should never meet each other for that would bring instant death to both of them. That is why it is tabooed for the ruler of Ogurugu to meet with the Ata of Igala. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979. Ogurugu elders deny ever being governed by Idah although they have always been in close communication. The dense forest of the Anambra river basin would seem to have protected the town from effective control by Idah.

Yet another tradition relates that Onojo Ogboni once retrieved a mysterious wooden chest called Akwata from a river; by opening the chest and peering into it he acquired unrivalled political sagacity. His reputation spread far and wide and succeeding Atas of Idah sent gifts of slaves to Ogurugu in order to acquire this ability. On receiving these gifts the wooden chest was sent to Akwacha near Idah to be part of the Ata's installation ritual. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu

elders interviewed on 12th January 1979. See also R.S. Seton, *op.cit.* p. 268; N.A.E., Op 398/1926 ONPROF 7/13/122 *op.cit.* p.3. Ogurugu elders maintain that the present Ata of Igala is a "government" Ata because he did not perform this ritual.

It is pertinent to note that the Igala kingdom seems to have had a tradition of over-mighty subjects who founded their own settlements and governed independent of the Ata's suzerainty. In 1867 S.A. Crowther (CMS CA3/04/754) reported that owing to a dispute between the Ata and the heads of the riverain clans, the latter left Idah and established their own settlements along river Niger. According to Crowther,

One of these is Abokko, Superintendent of the Board of Trade in this part of the river. Abokko has removed to his farm Oko-Okein about fourteen miles above Iddah, and Agabidoko is at Igbokein about twelve miles above Onitsha. These two chiefs being independent of their king, and of each other, are in positions to do great mischiefs to the king or to any other person who may be the object of their displeasure, no one can call them to account.

Indeed, Abokko once waged war on Agatu in the Benue valley entirely by himself. (W.B. Baikie 1852 p.291).

Again, missionaries reported the military intervention of Enwezo a wealthy Igala merchant in the Onitsha succession struggle after the death of Obi Akazua in March 1872. Enwezo fought unsuccessfully on the side of his maternal uncle who was a contestant to the throne. (For the 1872 succession dispute in Onitsha see C.M.S. CA3/09/4 "The Civil War at Onitsha, June 1872", by John A. Buck, Native Catechist Onitsha and C.M.S. CA3/030/I "Letter by Rev. Solomon Samuel Perry, 16th September, 1872." Such accounts attest to the fact that some Igala citizens, having amassed personal wealth and following, were able to defy the authority of the Ata.

In effect, therefore, the political relations between the Igbo and the Igala in the 17th - 19th century was between over-mighty Igala subjects and various Igbo communities. It is thus quite probable that in earlier times Onojo Ogboni of Ogurugu was one such subject who raided the Anambra river basin and the Nsukka region communities. On the general level the Igbo and Igala never fought wars, but skirmishes and slave raids were a common phenomenon. One of the explanations for Ogurugu's military expeditions into Igboland was related to its strategic geographical location on the Anambra river; it was well placed for tapping the products of the Nsukka region and Anambra Basin. Similarly, the products of Igala communities which were not transported to Idah were carried through Ogurugu down the Anambra river to Asaba. Thus Ogurugu was an important port belonging to the same category as Aboh, Osomari and Idah. It is for this reason that the Ogurugu raids on neighbouring communities should be seen as resulting from the same stimuli operating in the other riverain states at the time.

One major reason for Ogurugu raids into Igboland, as was evident from the traditions, was to procure slaves. Instead of waiting for supplies of slaves from hinterland communities, individuals resorted to raiding for them and with the introduction of firearms into the riverain towns in the latter part of the eighteenth century, their military superiority over the inland towns became pronounced. This stimulus was lacking among those far removed

from the major commercial arteries.

Again, the high population density of the Onitsha and Nsukka Igbo communities which were pillaged and enslaved by Ogurugu provided an inducement for such raids, and the same communities were to attract the attention of the Aro slave traders and their mercenaries in the nineteenth century. Ogurugu traditions state that some of the captives were settled in the various quarters of the town and were employed on the farms, for domestic chores, as traders or warriors. Many others were sold down the Anambra river, or marched overland to Idah for export down the Niger.

Another important reason for these raids seems to have been the desire by the Ogurugu Igala to control the trade routes in the area. The direction of these attacks and the role of Ogurugu in the Lower Niger trade would seem to justify this contention. The traditions of canoe-borne attacks down the Anambra river on Onitsha, Asaba, and Illah attest to the control of this route by the Ogurugu community before the spread of Aboh and Osomari influence. It seems likely too that it was the attempt to control the overland routes across the Ibaji Igala area that led to raids in that direction. Similarly, Ogurugu attacks on the Nsukka Igbo communities were designed to dominate the northwestern trade routes from those towns to Ogurugu. There is evidence that Ogurugu planted settlements, some of which were also military outposts, along the Anambra river and also along the overland routes to enhance their commercial enterprise. Along the river Anambra, Ogurugu settlements were said to have stretched southwards as far as Igbaku, and beyond Adani to the east on the overland trade route. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders, 12th January, 1979, see also N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29380 op.cit.)

It should be pointed out that like the other naval powers in the Lower Niger, Ogurugu also consolidated kinship links with towns on the important commercial routes to minimise the frequency of its resort to force to ensure its control over the trade routes, for example the Onitsha traditions state that Idoko, Onojo Ogboni's son from his marriage with Usse, an Onitsha princess, settled in the town with a large entourage (R.N. Henderson, 1972, p.86-90; S.I. Bosah N.D. p.25). Igala merchants from Ogurugu were said to have formed the village of Opanda along the northwestern route from Nsukka and in the same way, there were Igala at Ifite Ogwari, Igbaku, Nibo and Nkpologwu who co-ordinated the trade along the Anambra river and the overland route to Nsukka. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders, 12th January, 1979; Amadizi Ekota (90 years) interviewed at Nkpologwu on 13th January, 1979). It must be stressed, however, that while some Igala were spreading out from Ogurugu into various Igbo towns, others were going from Idah into the Nsukka Igbo communities. Since both groups were Igala speakers it is difficult to distinguish the specific centres in Igala country from which they migrated.

An idea of the time span covered by the Onojo Ogboni raids can be gleaned from Onitsha traditions. There, it was stated that Chima Ogbuefi Obi g Onitsha c. 1685-1715 A.D. (The dates were computed from the Onitsha Kinglist using a mean length of generation of thirty years). Married Ennobi an Igala princess and their son Aroti was brought up in Idah. He later returned and succeeded to the Obishop of Onitsha c. 1715-1745 A.D. It was during his regin that Onojo Ogboni was said to have raided Onitsha carrying away his daughter Usse in marriage. Onojo Ogboni's son from this marriage was Idoko who came to Onitsha in the reign of Aroli's successor, Omozele c. 1745-1775 A.D. The successors of Omozele were his brothers,

Chimedio and Olisa, and so had the same maternal connection with the Igala through their father Aroli. In addition, Olisa was succeeded by Chimedio's son Ijelekepe (c. 1775-1805) who thus also had a connection with the Igala through his grandfather Aroli. In this way Igala influence in Onitsha persisted and indeed intensified during those six reigns spanning from c. 1685-1805 A.D. R.N. Henderson (1972 p. 86-90,94). who carried out a study of Onitsha called this period the "Igala-Anambra stage". He, however, assigns its duration to between c. 1700-1780 A.D., perhaps regarding the reigns of Aroli's sons as the peak period of Igala influence in the town. Estimates by other scholars seem to be in agreement with the eighteenth century date offered by Henderson for the increasing military pressure on Igboland by the Igala. A.E. Afigbo (1977, p.86) assigns the Igala attacks on the Nsukka Igbo to between the middle of the seventeenth century and the end of the eighteenth century, and E. Isichei (1956, p.92) to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. M.A. Onwuejeogwu (1974, p.69) has pointed out that the shrinkage or Nri influence in the Nsukka Igbo area was due to Igala militarism between c. 1724-1794 A.D. It seems probable that Igala raids into Igboland took place mainly in the eighteenth century when the slave trade was at its peak. An Osomari historian, E. Kaine (1963 p.62-3) writing about this period in their history had this to say:

In the olden times Osomari people used to call all the villages around them "Aninso", meaning forbidden people. I am told that Osomari nearly wiped them out in those early days of piracy. In the same way ... they did a lot of havoc in the Anambra.

One consequence of Ogurugu raids in Igboland would have been a widespread sense of insecurity among the Anambra Igbo and the Nsukka towns and villages especially in the eighteenth century when the raids were at their peak. Such a situation impelled some of the communities to flee to more secure locations as, for example, the Omo community, which belongs to the Ayamelum group at Nsukka. Their original location was further north and they were compelled to flee southwards to their present location by a war with the Igala. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/28995 "Intelligence Report on the Ayamelum Group, Onitsha and Nsukka Divisions, Onitsha Province" (1933) by W.R.T. Milne, pp. 6-11; N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29380 op.cit). Similarly, the Achalla community of the Umulokpa group to the east of Ayamelum narrate that they migrated southwards because of Igala attacks. (N.A.E., OP 363A ONPROF 8/1/4586 "Intelligence Report on Umulokpa Area, Onitsha Division", by D.C.E. Tovey, p.22). Ogurugu attacks would also help to account for the fact that the more fertile western plains of northern Igboland are today sparsely populated while the less fertile Nsukka - Udi plateau carries a heavy population. The plateau was more defensible than the plains and closer habitation provided better security from the invaders. Since the end of the attacks there has been a gradual migration back (M.A. Onwuejeogwu, 1972, p.26)

On a more specific level Igala raids from Ogurugu contributed to the establishment of Igala seaking enclaves in northwestern Igboland. Ogurugu traditions narrate that the Igala speaking communities of Igga, Asaba and Ojor were military outposts founded from Ogurugu for raids into neighbouring communities. Indeed such settlements some of which are now extinct or have been absorbed by nearby Igbo populations were said to have once stretched further afield along the Anambra river to Igbakwu, and beyond Adani to the east (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979; S.C. Ukpabi,

1971 p.105.) Igbo traditions seem to indicate that the settlements went further into Aguleri and Umuleri along the Anambra river and to Nsukka to the east. In those towns certain forts are associated with defense against Ingala invaders. (Oral account by Chief Nelson Okoye (58 years) interviewed at Umuleri on 22nd January, 1979; See also M.C.M. Idigo, 1955, pp. 5-9).

Another important consequence of Ogurugu Igala attacks on the Nsukka Igbo towns was that it contributed to the waning of Nri cultural influence in the area. The immunity from attacks enjoyed by Nri ritualists in that area was violated and some Nri priests were captured and sold into slavery. This in addition to Idah's growing political status which was also exerting a pull on the Nsukka Igbo towns, resulted in the contraction of Nri sphere of influence. (M.A. Onwuejeogw, 1974, p.69).

The turbulence created by such raids from Ogurugu would also largely account for the political adjustments in parts of the Nsukka area aimed at ensuring security over a wide territory. For example, through the payment of dues to the prominent men in the neighbouring towns of Ihakpo, Ihorhor, Amokpo, Ihaka, and Ovoko, Enugu Ezike was able to forge a military confederacy for mutual defence. These towns recognised the suzerainty of the eze of Enugu Ezike and paid "leopard" tributes to him. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/30048, op.cit. pp. 5-8; C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of Nsukka Division..." phs. 132-5, 150-1. This was also the case with the Udunedem confederacy composed of Obolo, Igugu, Umundu, Imilike, Ezimo, Obodo Aba, and Amala. This latter group proved a less successful alliance for its members constantly fought among themselves. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/29361 "Intelligence Report on Udunedem Confederation, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province" (1934), by O.P. Gunning, pp. 8-11; C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of Nsukka Division..." phs. 151-155).

The raids from Ogurugu would seem to have been reduced after the appearance of the Aro and the Aboh merchants in Nsukka area and the Anambra river basin. This enabled Igbo towns to acquire firearms in sufficient quantity to combat the Igala effectively. An idea of the probable date of the introduction of firearms in the Igbo hinterland can be obtained from Onitsha regional history; firearms appeared in the town in the reign of Obi Ijelekpe C. 1775-1805. (R.N. Henderson, 1972, p.92-4). The possession of firearms enabled Onitsha to attempt the conquest of the neighbouring towns of Obosi and Ogidi but this was halted during the same reign through the purchase of firearms by the other towns from the Aro.

It seems likely that the Nsukka and the Anambra Igbo communities were also receiving supplies of firearms from the Aro at about this time, if not at an earlier period. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Aro merchants had penetrated to Eha Amufu where they established an important market. The Nike group who had long been trading partners of the Aro also contributed to the supply of new weapons into the Nsukka area at this time. Evidence from the Igbo slave Olaudah Equiano affirms that firearms had reached the Igbo hinterland by the middle of the eighteenth century probably through the Aro merchants. According to Equiano, (1967, p.7)

"We have also markets at which I have been frequently with my mother. These are sometimes visited by stout mahogany coloured men from the south-west of us: we call them Oye-Eboe, which term signifies red men living at a distance. They generally bring us firearms, gunpowder,

hats, beads, and dried fish".

This development explains the reversal in the direction of aggression and the seizure of the initiative by the Igbo communities as shown by some Igala accounts. For instance, three Communities of Igga, and Igala town, narrate that they formerly resided further south near Igbaku but were driven away by the Igbo inhabitants of Igbaku for killing one of their citizens. The Igala of Asaba also relate that they were formerly located at Adani, (now an Igbo town,) but were forced out of the locality. Continued attacks from Adani compelled the Asaba people to cross river Obina to their present location. (Oral account by chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders, 12th January, 1979; N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29380 *op.cit.* pp.7-9). As was previously mentioned, the Igbo town of Umuleri, claimed to have driven out the Igala from a nearby settlement.

Furthermore, Aboh's military influence had penetrated the Anambra river by the second half of the eighteenth century. By the time Aboh's military alliance with Osomari, made formidable by Aboh's superiority in firearms, had enabled them to control the Niger-Anambra confluence area. (I. Nzimiro 1972 p.12, R.N. Henderson 1972 p.7-9). This development brought about a realignment of political allegiances in that area. For example, Anam, and Igbo community in the Arambra river basin was formerly tributary to the Igala, but by 1854 paid tribute (W.B. Baikie, 1858 p.293) and further up the Anambra river, a community in the town of Nsugbe was founded by an Aboh citizen early in the nineteenth century and the town paid tribute to Aboh. These developments in Anam and Nsugbe indicate that by the later part of the eighteenth century Aboh's influence was strong in the region. According to Ogedengbe, (1971 p.253) when Obi Ossai I ascended the throne of Aboh in the 1820's, the kingdom was in complete control of the Igbo section of the Lower Niger. This undoubtedly contributed to the decline of Ogurugu's influence in the Niger - Anambra Confluence region.

#### A reappraisal of the conquest theories in Igbo-Igala political relations

It has been presumed by some writers that the raids from Ogurugu into parts of Igboland led to the conquest and administration of those areas by the Ata of Igala. By extension, therefore, much of the discernible social and political institutions which the Igbo borrowed from the Igala have been attributed to the consequences of the subjugation, and in most cases used as evidences of Igala suzerainty. Certain facts have to be borne in mind in a re-examination of the proposition that the Igala governed parts of Igboland; these include the dating of Igala attacks, the status of Ogurugu in Igala kingdom, and the nature and aims of the raids.

As already argued the first evidence advanced for Igala conquest and administration of northern Igboland was that a number of Nsukka Igbo towns appended the titles of Igala officials to their names. Thus Eha Alumona and Enugu Ezike were called Eha Alumona - Ata and Enugu Ezike - Ata. Similarly, Nsukka, Okpubje and Obukpa were also called Nsukka - Ashadu, Okpuja - Ashadu, and Obukpa - Ashadu respectively. It was, presumed that by appending these titles the Igbo towns indicated which Igala official administered them, (See for example C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of the Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province", pbs. 7-8; S.C. Ukpabi, 1971, pp. 104-5; A.J. Shelton, 1968, pp. 248-9; J.S. Boston, 1962 p.57.

According to the Nsukka communities, the names represented their appreciation of the power of the Igala rulers.

It should be noted that the appending of epithets after the names of towns was widespread in Igboland. The idea behind such additions varied; in some cases it was meant to denote the original place from where migration started. For example, Onitsha people called their town Onitsha Ado signifying that they migrated from Ado (Benin). In other cases it represented a praise name to show the martial prowess of the town, such as Aboh Obuchili Osimili which meant Aboh the lord of the river, or Osomari Igili, which meant Osomari the powerful town. Such epithets sprang from the towns themselves and were not external to them. Thus the Igala title suffixes borne by the Nsukka Igbo towns were not mentioned by the Igala in referring to the affected towns. It should be realised that Igala commercial and military influence extended to Idoma, Igbirra, and Nupe lands and yet there are no similar appendages of Igala title names to the towns in those areas. It would thus seem that this feature belonged to the Igbo culture complex. The most likely explanation for these suffixes was that the fame of Idah which had spread into the Nsukka Igbo area through commercial contact had generated admiration. Exotic commodities and new ideas and techniques flowed into the Nsukka area through Idah. In addition it was presumed that the slave raids also were remotely controlled from Idah. Thus the Ata came to symbolise strength political power. A strong and courageous young man came to be called "Nwa Ata" that is the Ata's child. (Oral account by Stanislaus Nwamba (80 years) interviewed at Eha Alumona on 17th January, 1979; Chief Iennis Ezenweze (46 years), David Ugwoke (80 years), and Bennett Okoli (40 years) interviewed at Obimo on 12th January, 1979.

A problem arises, however, when this phenomenon is attributed to Igala military subjugation. As has been argued Igbo and Igala traditions do not associate Igala raids with Idah, the administrative seat of the Igala officials mentioned. Igala attacks on Igboland stemmed from Ogurugu, and while it could be argued that the Ogurugu Igala were acting as agents of the Ata or the Ashadu in extending Igala influence into Igboland, this viewpoint is belied by the evidence which affirms the semi-autonomous political status of Ogurugu whose affairs were not directed from Idah. Furthermore, the Ogurugu raids were also carried into parts of Igala country, showing their indiscriminate nature. This also disposes of the argument that the suffixes were semantic devices designed to avert Igala raids by claiming a putative genetic connection with them; if such was the motive then a better suffix would have been Onoja, or Ogboni.

Again, traditions in the Nsukka Igbo towns deny the payment of tribute to Idah or Ogurugu. (Oral account collected from the elders of the various Nsukka Igbo communities in January, 1979 deny ever paying tributes to Idah. See also C.M. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report..." ph.8); what evidence we have indicates that such payments were made to the Ezw Nri of Agukwu. Traditions in Nsukka narrate that during the annual sacrifice in January (Nzu Ahua), the people of Eha Alumona sent to Atama Ezoguda of Nsukka a part of the animals which they killed during the year. A portion of the offering was consumed and the rest sent to the Eze Nri through the Eze of Obimo, the Onyichi of Nkpologu, and the Oyishi of Ugbeke. (Oral account by Atama Ezoguda (c. 100 years) interviewed at Nsukka on 9th January, 1979; Chief Dennis Ezenweze (46 years) the King of Obimo, David Ugwoke (80 years) and Bennett Okoli (40 years) interviewed at Obimo on 13th January, 1979; C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report..." ph. 97). Also lacking in the

traditions of Nsukka towns were such sayings as were found in the Western Igbo communities which indicated tributary relationship with the Edo kingdom of Benin. Among these communities it was said, for example, that "He who kills a leopard sends himself on a journey to Benin (Idu)". This was a clear evidence of the payment of 'leopard' tribute to the Oba of Benin. (Oral account by Obiechei Osadebay (90 years), G.J.U. Ojeh (74 years) and J.I. Oje (70 years) interviewed at Illah on 28th December, 1979. Within the Kwa-speaking region the leopard was regarded as the brother of kings and so anyone who killed it in the king's domain had to send its corpse to him.

What probably happened was that with the rise to political prominence of the Igala kingdom in the eighteenth century there was a shift in political, economic and cultural interest by the Nsukka towns from Nri to Idah. This did not, however, lead to a complete severance of links with Nri which was preserved in the vestigial form of Nsu Ahua ritual.

A second phenomenon which it was assumed meant that the Igala overran and governed parts of Igboland, was the practise by which the rulers of some Igbo towns went to Idah to receive their titles. C.K. Meek who advanced this theory and whose opinion was subsequently echoed by other scholars had this to say; (1930 para. 9)

'As further evidence of the influence of the Ata of Ida in the Nsukka Division there is a definite tradition in many towns in which the title of Eze of "Ruler" is found that the Eze-ship was introduced by the Igala, and that in former times no Eze considered himself properly appointed until he had made a journey to Ida and received the formal approval of the Ata.'

There is no doubt that the Eze title in the Nsukka Igbo area was derived from two sources, namely Agukwu-Nri and Idah. However, the argument that the practice of obtaining titles from Idah originated from Igala conquest is hard to substantiate. As was previously pointed out there are no traditions of Igala attacks from Idah on these parts of Igboland. If, as the traditions indicate, the conquests came from the semi-independent polity of Ogurugu then the title aspirants should have visited that town instead of Idah.

A study of Igala history also reveals that the practice of obtaining titles from the Ata by Igbo and Idoma rulers was an incidental offshoot of bureaucratic developments within the Idah state. The political expansion of Igala kingdom necessitated a decentralization of the administrative machinery and the appointment of new political officials. These officials and their aides successfully isolated the Ata and emphasized the ritual aspects of the monarchy. The cult of the Ata spread beyond the bounds of Igala kingdom and attracted to the Ata's court rulers seeking legitimisation from a great potentate, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the Igala state was at the apogee of its political power. (M. Clifford, 1936 p.400-404; R.G. Armstrong, 1955 p. 803). Before that time it would seem that the ruler of some Nsukka communities journeyed to the Eze Nri's court at Agukwu. According to Nsukka traditions the symbols of office of their first Eze, consisting of an iron staff, cluster of brass bells, and a sacrificial knife, were brought from Nri. (Oral account by Atama Ezoguda (c. 100 years) interviewed at Nsukka on 9th January, 1979; C.K. Meek, 1930, ph. 97). With the rise of the Igala state and the waning of Nri influence in the Nsukka area the rulers of the towns turned their

attention northwards to the Ata's court. (A similar development would seem to have taken place in Aguleri when a famous warrior in the town called Aguve travelled to Idah to obtain a title from the Ata. The kings of Aguleri were normally crowned by Nri men. (Idigo, M.C.M. 1955, pp.12-13; M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1956, p.123). Idoma traditions also do not associate their title-taking journeys to Idah with any form of conquest. Instead the traditions claim that the practice began with the arrival of the Tiv in the early 19th century an event which blocked Idoma access to Wukari, the Jukun capital, from where they previously obtained their titles. Consequently, they began to visit the Ata's court at Idah for the same purpose. (N.A.K. S.N.P. 17: K 2013. pp.5, 9-11. See L. and P. Bohannon, 1953, pp.12-13). It should be remembered that Idah like Nri, Wukari, Ile-Ife, and Benin, was not only a political but a religious centre whose influence could transcend ethnic boundaries.

That there was no necessary correlation between conquest and the practice of obtaining titles from neighbouring rulers is borne out by a few examples. E.J. Alagoa (1964, p.48-49) has pointed out the Benin's political authority did not penetrate the Delta region yet traditions in the Delta states show that some rulers went to Benin to receive their insignia of political authority and for confirmation of their appointment. Similarly, some western Urhobo communities which never experienced any invasion from the Aboh kingdom visited the Obi's court to receive their titles; one such town was Abraka about which G.B. Williams said:

'Although the Aboh people rarely made war on villages which they did not reach by water their power was recognised and the village head of Abraka, some thirty miles from the nearest waterway connecting with Aboh, always went to the Obi to receive at his hands the title and insignia of his office. (N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/26769 op.cit. See section titled "Aboh Clan" enclosed in the file; O. Ikime, op.cit. p.14).

Igala traditions indicate that the Atas who reigned from the middle of the nineteenth century increased the sale of titles to Idoma and Igbo individuals. This was caused by the economic plight of the kingdom too. The Fulani depredations in the north had sent waves of refugees fleeing southwards to Idah whilst the penetration of the European trading companies and the abolition of the slave trade dealt a severe blow to the state's economy. It was in this context that Ata Amaga 1876-1900 increased the sale of titles, and encouraged piracy, (M. Clifford, 1936, p.404; P.E. Okwoli, 1975, p. 89-90). The practice of obtaining titles from Idah continued in Nsukka towns until the 1940s and European observers thought that such a development could only take place within an imperial milieu. The evidence weighs more in favour of the wish of Igbo rulers to identify with the Ata whose fame was known in these communities through close commercial contact and intermarriages. In a segmentary society, pervaded with religion and ritual, it is obvious that the social status of those who obtained titles from the Ata was greatly enhanced. The proponents of the conquest theory have also identified the religious institution of Atama priests as another evidence of Igala imperialism in Igboland. According to C.K. Meek, (1930, ph.10).

...It is clear that many of the priests known as Atama, who are often the most influential in these Igbo towns, derived their titles and possibly also their cults from

the Igala. The very word Atama is the normal Igala term for priest.

This notion was elaborated upon by A.J. Shelton (1971, p.204-9, 240) who regarded the Atama institution as the linchpin of Igala imperial control in Igboland. He argued that these shrine priests were originally Igala agents implanted in the Igbo communities, whose main functions were to act as instruments of social control through the manipulation of the earth cults. This religio-political system was based on the Igala appreciation of the centrality of the earth cult in the Igbo political organisation. Since the atama were the mediators between God and Man they were generally feared and respected. Thus the atama were obeyed and tribute paid to them which they passed on to the Ata of Idah.

One way to test the validity of Shelton's thesis is to identify the role of the atama in Igala land whence, the institution was derived. In Igala country the Atama was a shrine priest who performed divination rituals and possessed no secular powers. (N.A.K. S.N.P. 17: K 2445 p.20). At the local government level there were district heads called onu ane (land chiefs) who were the religious and political heads of the districts. They allocated land within the district, settled disputes, collected tribute and were responsible for the ritual welfare of the community including the offering of sacrifices to the earth shrine of the district. (J.S. Boston, 1967, p.27-28). Thus there were two types of priests in the Igala community, those who performed purely priestly functions (Atama), and those who performed priestly and political functions (onu ane).

In the same way there were two categories of priests in Igboland, those who performed strictly religious functions and those who combined these with secular functions. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950 p.25-26). The latter group came closest to the functionaries described by Shelton and in the Igala context should be called onu ane and not atama and if indeed they were imposed by the Igala they should have borne the appropriate appellation. That this was not the case would seem to indicate a misappropriation of nomenclature by Nsukka Igbo priests who were associating themselves with the powerful Igala state. To further illustrate this trend it should be noted that the priests of the cult of Ezoguda in Nsukka, Ezugworie in Eha Alumona, and Agbala in Nibo who derived their cults from Nri and maintained links with that ritual centre also bore the titles of Atama. It seems likely, therefore, that this religious development ran parallel with the political one.

Furthermore, Atama priest titles are also found in parts of Igboland that did not experience Igala raids. For example, the village groups of Eha Amufu and Umualor to the south-east of Nsukka and the Nike village group to the south have shrine priests bearing atama titles. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/29387 "Intelligence Report on the Eha Amufu and Umualo Areas, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province" (1934), by J.Dixon, p.13.) It is well known, however, that with the penetration of Aro traders into the Nsukka area by the middle of the eighteenth century, Eha Amufu became a major trade centre and the trade route from Adoru through Akpanya, both in Igala land, passed through Obukpa, Nsukka, Eha Alumona, Mbu, Leke, to Eha Amufu. In the same way the Nike village group played an active role as the agents of the Aro in their trade with Ogurugu and Idah in the Igala country. It is interesting to note that among the Nike, the atama priest for the whole town was chosen from the slave class, and was said by W.R.G. Horton (1954, 319-324) to avoid a tendency towards autocracy that might result from a concentration of

ritual and political power in the hands of a free individual. Thus the presence of atama titles in parts of Igboland belongs to the borrowings of a segmentary society juxtaposed with a powerful centralized policy.

It is evident, therefore, that the attacks from Ogurugu were not a consciously directed political venture into parts of Igboland, but part of the slave raids of the trading states of the lower Niger. In most cases such strikes were conducted by wealthy merchants and were more economic than political in their aims. This explains why the raids did not give rise to any stable political organisation in the affected areas. Furthermore, these raids from Ogurugu, Osonari, Aboh and Aro on parts of Igboland no doubt contributed to the high percentage of Igbo slaves that were exported abroad. Writing in 1790 Captain John Adams who made several voyages to the Deltak estimated that out of over twenty thousand slaves sold annually at Bonny, sixteen thousand were Igbo. (J. Adams, 1966, p.129).

## CHAPTER 6

### TRENDS IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

Centuries of contact between the Igbo and Igala have resulted in considerable cultural exchanges. In the literature great prominence is given to Igala influences on Igbo culture compared to reciprocal Igbo influences. This imbalance could be because there has been little ethnographical study of the southern part of Igala country while there had been detailed and informative documentation of the northern Igbo groups, (See for example C.K. Meek, 1930, M.D.W. Jeffreys, "Awka Division Intelligence Report", N.A.E., E.P. 8766 C.S.E. 1/85/4596, 1931). J.S. Boston's (1968) anthropological study of the Igala kingdom was based mainly on information collected from Idah and Gwolawo districts which are further to the north and so did not reflect conditions in the southern half of the Igala kingdom. However, the Government Intelligence Reports on the southern Igala communities stored in the National Archives in Kaduna, P.C. Dike's (1977) recent anthropological research in southern Igala country, and fieldwork undertaken by the author attest to substantial Igbo impact on Igala culture.

As will be shown below the movement of ideas was two-way and affected the entire life-style and ideological beliefs of both people. Such cultural exchanges were more pronounced on the borderland where a mixed culture developed. However, while Igbo influence on the Igala was more social and cultural, that of the Igala on the Igbo was more political in nature. Outside the borderlands Igala influence seems to have penetrated deeper into Igboland along the River Niger, and indeed to have contributed very much to the emergence of a distinct culture in that area.

It was in the political sphere as was shown in Chapter V that Igala influence in Igboland was pronounced. A number of Igbo groups have traditions which affirmed that their kingship institutions were derived from the Igala kingdom and the Igala monarchy at the height of its political power in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries legitimized rulers from parts of Igboland and Idoma country. An example of one of the towns that came into the Ata's political orbit was Aguleri on the Anambra river. Aguleri had had kings who were crowned by the representatives of the priest-king of Nri, but traditions recorded by Idigo, and Aguleri historian, narrate that Agube a noble man and famous warrior in the town visited Idah for the confirmation of his title as the king of Aguleri. (M.C.M. Idigo, 1955, p.12-14).

It is interesting that the famous priest-king of Nri from where many Igbo communities derived their kingship institution, had certain items of regalia that were similar to that of the Ata of Idah. The most important item in the regalia of both monarchs was the bronze pectoral mask which was hung on their chests. The Igala called it Ejubejailo (the eye which brings fear to other eyes), while the Nri and Oreri Igbo called it ikputu eze or nwata ona (child of brass). (M. Clifford, 1936, p.424. M.D.W. Jeffreys, 1934. Chapter XIII, pp. 22-3). Some Igala traditions state that the Ata's pectoral mask was war booty captured from Benin during the early sixteenth

century but others claim that it was brought by a Benin prince who reigned at Idah; (G.T. Mott, "The Connections of the Atas of Igala with the Obas of Benin", enclosed in N.A.K., K.2445 op.cit. p.4; P.E. Okwoli, 1975 p.30). K.C. Murray, 1949, p.85-92) has dated the mask to the sixteenth century on stylistic and historical grounds.

At Oreri, a town which is supposed to have broken away from Nri, the eze still wears his pectoral mask, but he and other elders told Jeffreys, (1941, 140-142) that they did not know where the mask came from or who was the first king to wear it. At Nri the face mask was buried with the dead king, but when a new king was chosen it was exhumed together with the skull of the dead king; the skull was buried underneath the throne of the new king who then wore the mask. However, it is significant to note that Nri elders claimed to have crowned the Ata of Idah and according to Jeffreys, (1934, chap. XIII, p.24: 1956, p.124) it was also said that when a new king of Benin was enthroned an Umundri [Nri] man must attend. Such traditions would seem to argue for an Idah or Benin derivation for the bronze mask, but the presence of a bronze pectoral mask among the grave goods at Igbo-Ukwu, dated to the ninth century, argues for an indigenous tradition. It would seem, therefore, that either the three societies evolved the idea of the pectoral mask independently, or that the borrowing took place long ago or that the original common source of derivation has been forgotten.

Eastwards from the Anambra river basin, Igala political influence was very much evident in the Nsukka area. Many towns and villages in that area have traditions which stated that their monarchy was derived from Idah; for example Nkpologwu, Amala, Ihorhoror, Unadu, Itchi and Enugu Ezike belong to this category. Some other towns which did not derive their kingship from Idah nevertheless visited the Ata's court for confirmation of their titles; these included such towns as Akpugo, Ukpabi, Ibeagwa Aka, Okpuje, and Ibeagwa Ani. (Oral information collected from various Nsukka elders during my fieldwork in January 1979. See also C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of Nsukka Division..." phs. 112-145; J.S. Boston, "Notes on contact between the Igal and the Ibo", p.58). However, among those towns which claim that their first rulers came from Idah in some cases where the traditions preserve the names of the first rulers, they are undoubtedly Igbo ones.

Good examples are found at: Ihorhoror which claims that its first ruler, Owele Eze, came from Idah; (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/29603 "Intelligence Report on Eketekete Group, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province" (1934), by J. Dixon, pp. 3-4). Obimo where the first king Ezugwu, also arrived from Idah (Oral information by Chief Dennis Ezenweze (46 years), David Ugwoke (80 years), Bennett Okoli (40 years), and Mrs. Jemica Ugwoke (70 years) interviewed at Obimo on 13th January, 1979), and at Enugu Ezike here the traditions deserve fuller statement for it is stated that Ezike, son of the atama of Amube, was captured and taken to Idah as a slave. After some years he escaped and established himself at Enugu Ezike (Ezike's hill). Ezodo, the oldest of his four sons (Ezodo, Itodo, Ozi, and Asodo), successfully established his influence over the surrounding villages, who agreed that he be given the authority to rule the entire group with the title of eze Enugu Erzike. He then made a journey to the Ata's court at Idah to have his title confirmed and was presented with a horse and a red fez, and gown. (Oral information by Chief Raymond Urko Eyida (68 years) interviewed at Umuozu Enugu Ezike on 17th January, 1979. See also N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/30048 "Intelligence Report on the People of Enugu Ezike, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province" (1935), by V.K. Johnson, pp. 5-7).

From these traditions it would seem that some of the first rulers were innovating Igbo individuals who from their contact with the Igala accepted the idea of kingship and later introduced into their homes. Also it is very likely that some had acquired wealth from the slave trade and wanted to enhance their social status by taking eze titles. To obtain a confirmation of title from the Ata of Idah was expensive; for example the eze of Ibeagwa Ani, at the beginning of this country, gave seven cows, eleven origins, eight pigs, forty-three goats, and \$100 in brass rods to the Ata to receive his title. (N.A.I., C.S.O. 26/30537 "Intelligence Report on Eror, Nsukka, Ibeagwa Ani villages of Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province (1935)" by J. Bamby. pp. 7-8).

Igala political influence in the Nsukka area was also evident in the form of administrative titles found there. These Ama titles defined centralized, specified functions which are recognized by the entire community. Their main functions included the summoning of town meetings, the adjudication of cases between kindreds or quarters of the town, the imposition of fines on law breakers, the control of markets and the general maintenance of law and order. The Ama titles have been described as autocratic system that was superimposed on the indigenous conciliar system of Igbo society. (Oral account by Nathaniel Ugwu (50 years), Joseph Ozhicko (48 years), and Chukwuma Ozhioko interviewed at Nsukka on 7th January, 1979; C.K. Meek, 1930, phs. 170-181). N.A.E. OP 1477k ONDIST 12/1/1042 "Intelligence Report on Isien Group (Eha Alumona and Orba area)", by E. R. Reeves, p. 14). The main differences between the titles and Ozok titles described previously. (p.24) are that while the Ama titles are the privileges of particular lineages, Ozo titles are open to every freeborn citizen, and while Ama titles conferred executive and judicial powers on their holders, Ozo titles conferred mainly social prestige.

The Ama titles varied in the different towns; for example at Nsukka they are Ata, Asadu, Arumona, and Asogwa, while at Obukpa they include Asadu, Iwu, Ozhicko, Asogwa, and Eze. In general Ama titles are found in the northern half of the Nsukka area from Opi northwards, while the southern half is characterised by ozo titles (with distinctive facial scarifications). (N.A.E., Op 1020 ONPROF 8/1/4724 "Intelligence Report on the villages of Ukehe, Oyoho, Ochima, Ikolo, Aku, Ohebe, Umuna, Ngalakpu, Umunku, and Idoha in the Nsukka Division" (1934), by J. Bamby, p.8). This cultural demarcation suggests the extent of the penetration of Igala influence from the north and Nri influence from the south and is supported by the acceptance of the Igala custom by which title holders wore bead bracelets on their wrists as symbols of their office. Indeed, for those rulers who received their titles at Idah, the fastening of bead bracelets on their wrists was done at the Ata's court and formed an important point of the installation ceremony.

In the political sphere Igala influence was also noticeable in the adaption of Igala religious titles for political administration. As was pointed out in the last chapter, owing to Igala influence, many earth priests and priests of the other divinities came to bear the Igala title atama. This title was incorrectly applied to the earth priests whose functions differed markedly from those of the Igala atama shrine priests. It would appear that with the need for larger and more centralised administration in the late eighteenth century, some Igbo towns adapted Igala concepts of local administration. This would account for the fact that in towns like Nsukka, Eha Alumona, and Enugu Ezike, the earth priest was also a

secular official like onu ane in the Igala kingdom. At Nsukka the Atama Ezoguda was also both the spiritual and secular head of the town and presided during meetings of the elders. (Oral account by Atama Ezoguda (100 years) interviewed at Nguru, Nsukka on 9th January, 1979; C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of Nsukka Division...", phas. 96-7). While at Eha Alumona, which has multiple eze institutions, the holder of titles did not wield any authority beyond their respective quarters, but atama was the priest of the entire community and presided at the general council of elders. (Oral account by Stanislaus Nwamba (80 years) interviewed at Eha Alumona on 17th January, 1979; C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of Nsukka Division...", phs. 96-7. In Enugu Ezike it was the atama (Ugwu Aka of Amube) who was the overall town authority. (Oral account by Chief Raymond Urko Eyida (68 years) interviewed at Enugu Ezike on 17th January, 1979). It must be noted, however, that the atama was not the foremost religious and political personality in every Nsukka Igbo community; at Nkpologwu, Eha Amufu, and Obimo for example they remained essentially religious figures with little or no political functions:

There were also certain religious cults in Igboland which were derived from the Igala. One of the most important was the Egugun cult associated with the Igala Egu festival. In the Igala kingdom the Egu festival lasted seven days and was the most important annual celebration. (M. Clifford, 1936, p.431-2; J.S. Boston, 1968, p.207-18), was celebrated in commemoration of the ancestors at the beginning of the yam harvest and during the celebrations the Ata offered sacrifices at the Egu shrines of his nine immediate predecessors.

The Egugun cult features prominently in towns along the Niger like Onitsha, Osomari, Ilah, Odekpe and Oko and within them was associated with lineages that had Igala ancestry. It had a special type of masquerade called mmuo ogonogo (tall ghost), believed to have come originally from Igala. (Oral account collected from elders in the Igbo riverain towns in December, 1979). R.N. Henders, (1972, p. 349) has given a good description of these masquerades:

'These are tall figures, wrapped in a highly valued, designed Igala cloth which drapes from the head to form an elongated cone, somewhat rounded toward the top. Above it, the "head", is a snake-like, cloth-wrapped protuberance which may, when the figure bends over, strike out capriciously at bystanders with blows said to be deadly.

Onitsha traditions state that the cult was brought to the town during the reign of Obi Omozele by Idoke son of Usse, and Onitsha princess, and Onojo Ogboni, the Igala warrior. Oral tradition suggest that initially the monarchy employed the masquerade to terrify all its subjects and enforce obedience, but rather later it also began to be employed by Onitsha citizens of Igala ancestry who seized upon it as a special Igala privilege, during certain ceremonies to terrify the Onitsha Igbo. For example when the masquerade appeared during the funeral ceremony of Onitsha citizens of Igala extraction, they would call out "Igbo Mabo!" which means "Igbo run away!" It was in order to check such activities by Igala immigrants that King Omozele transferred them from their former location in the north to the centre of the town where they could be closely observed. (R.N. Henderson, 1972, pp.86-89; I. Nzimiro, 1922 p.55. According to Robert Olisa the Atamanya of Osomari, Daniel Oranefo Azikiwe and G.H.N. Nzegwu (the Gbosaobi

of Onitsha) the idea behind driving the Igbo away by exclaiming "Igbo Mabo!" was to have the privacy to perform the olu rituals of the funeral ceremony. The olu group were classed as people who pursued riverain occupation, who inhabited the banks of the Niger as distinct from their hinterland kinsmen. Since most of Onitsha population did not engage in riverain occupation they were regarded as belonging to the Igbo rather than the olu group. Thus the Asaba people although living on the banks of the Niger could not participate in the special egugun ceremonies. Oral account by Robert Olisa Nzedegwu II (82 years) interviewed at Osomari on 27th December, 1979; Chief G.H.N. Nzegwu (66 years) interviewed at Onitsha on 24th January, 1979; Daniel Oranefo Azikiwe interviewed on 24th January, 1979 at Onitsha.

In Osomari the egugun cult was not only a form of ancestral veneration but was also employed as an agent of social sanction. A command uttered by the egugun permitted of no appeal or defiance and citizen, including the king, who contravened its rulings faced the death penalty. Membership of the cult was restricted to people of Igala descent and in this way it was a symbol of identity for the group. (E. Kaine, 1963, p.16-18, 25). In most of the towns where the cult existed it had an esoteric language akin to Igala and was understood only by the initiates. This last feature was a pointer to the original source of the cult.

Another cult associated with Igala influence in Igboland was that of Onojo Ogbohi, which had its centre at Ogurugu where it was established by the Igala warrior, Onojo Ogboni. (Oral account by Chief Tago Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders, 12th January, 1979; R.S. Seton, 1968, p.268). Onojo Ogboni, famous for his military activities and supernatural powers, was defied in Igbo communities which included Osomari, Odekpe, Illah and Oko along the Niger, and Eha Alumona, Nkpologwu, and Enugu Ezike inland. In some communities it was a state cult while in others it was restricted to sections of the town with Igala descent. Igbo ritualists, like their Igala counterparts, visited depressions believed to have been footprints left on rocks by Onojo Ogboni, to extract magical substances.

In the Nsukka Igbo town of Ichi there is a cult known as Nkumichi (the sacred stone of Ichi), its symbol being a stone which was said to have been brought for Idah. The priest of the cult offered sacrifices at the shrine twice a year for the general welfare of the town, and oaths were sworn on it for the settlement of disputes. (C.K. Meek, "An Ethnographical Report on the Peoples of Nsukka Division..." ph. 239). At the town of Amala also in the same area, it was believed that when the priest of the Ezugwu cult died he was reincarnated as an Ata of Idah, and when an Ata died he reincarnated as a priest of Ezugwu. It was, therefore, customary for a new Ata to send livestock to the priest for sacrifice while the priest in return sent to the Ata chalk from Ezugwu's shrine. (C.K. Meek, 1937, p.161).

In the Igala kingdom there was substantial Igbo influence in religion and ritual. One such example, which may be described in detail, was in the use of a ritual symbol of authority called in Igbo an ofo staff. An ofo was made from a naturally fallen twig of the ofo tree (Detarium Senegalense) and represented the authority of a man over his wives and children. Among the Igbo it was "the supreme ancestral symbol, the staff of traditional authority and influence as well as the symbol of justice, truth and right living". (A.E. Afigbo, 1972, p.21). The ofo symbol achieved a high level of formal elaboration in Igboland, embodying various kinds of authority and sacredness and there were various kinds of ofo staff for title associations, cults, and personal gods; but the basic form was associated with paternal

control. (W.R.G. Horton has described the ofo as "a sort of official stamp which validates the existence of the cult, social group, or individuals with whom it is associated by linking it with Chukwu, the ultimate source of all life". W.R.G. Horton, 1956, p.22-3).

The southern Igala communities of Ibaji and Ogurugu also used ofo staffs (using the same name), as symbols of authority and truth, the family ofo staff being inherited by the eldest son of a man on his death, while the custody of the lineage ofo staffs lies with eldest male member of the lineage. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979, For the use of the ofo symbol in Ibaji see P.C. Dike, pp. 266-267). Farther north in Igala country, the ofo concept is lacking and in its place are found ancestral cult symbols in the form of ritual staffs called okwute. These were mainly ancestral icons to which occasional sacrifices were made and were not used as symbols of traditional authority. (J.S. Boston, 1968, p.11-12,35). It is noteworthy that in Igboland it was believed that the holder of an ofo staff could communicate with a variety of supernatural forces including the dead and could invoke punishment by supernatural forces on refractory lineage members. (R.N. Henderson, 1972, p.119). The high level of development of the ofo concept in Igboland may, therefore, may be connected with the absence of central political authority in a largely segmentary society.

There were also certain cults found in parts of Igala land which most probably diffused into the area from northern Igboland, among these was the Ikenga cult. This has been described by M.A. Onwuejeogwu (1939, p.45) as "the cult of the right hand, which symbolises individual achievements through hard work (with one's hand)". The Ikenga was commonly represented by a carved wooden seated figure of a man with two horns on his head, a sword in his right hand and a skull in his left hand. M.A. Onwuejeogwu (1972-3, p.92) summarised the mean of these symbolic objects thus.

The two ram horns mean that the owner of the Ikenga must go ahead in his business with the stubbornness of a ram. The knife in his right hand means that he must cut down any obstacle on the way and the skull in the left hand means that he must always take the lead in order to succeed.

The Ikenga was associated with an individual's personal god (chi) which guides and determines the course of that person's life from birth to death.

The Ikenga cult was also found in the Igala kingdom where it was called okegga. The carved wooden Igala okegga was simply a human figure and lacked the symbolic projections of the Igbo type. In addition the Igala Okegga differed from the Igbo version in being dedicated to the ancestors. (Oral account by Peter A. Achema (51 years) the Achadu of Igal, Ainoko Adebo (40 years), and Awulu Ata (50 years) interviewed at Idah on 4th January, 1979). Among the Ibaji and Ogurugu Igala communities however were found Ikenga cults of the Igbo type with identical features and functions and bearing Igbo name (For a description of the physical features and functions of the Ikenga in Ibaji see P.C. Dike, 1977, pp.262-264. In the course of my fieldwork in the Igala country I made personal observations of the distinctive features of the Ikenga carvings in Southern and Northern parts of the Area). These groups can be said to have derived their cults from the Igbo. In the case of the northern Igala cults it is difficult to be categorical about their derivation for the "cult of the hand" was widespread

among various southern Nigerian groups such as Benin, Ishan, Urhobo and Isoko, some of whom had close communication with the Igal. (R.E. Bradbury, 1973, p.261).

Another religious practice found among the southern Igala which was probably borrowed from the Igbo was the worship of the yam deity called Ifejioku by the Igbo. Sacrifices were made to the deity on specified occasions by elders or in some towns by special shrine priest and in many northern Igbo towns the harvesting and eating of new yams had to be preceded by a Ifejioku ritual ceremony; no one may dig up his crop until the rites had been completed. (C.K. Meek, 1930, phs. 229-233; R.N. Henderson, 1972 385-400; D. Forde, and G.I. Jones, p.25; V.C. Uchendu, pp. 98-100.

The Ifejioku cult was similarly prominent in the South Igala Ogurugu communities while it was absent among the central and northern Igala towns. It is significant that the location of Ibaji and Ogurugu on the rivers Niger and Anambra floodplain made yam cultivation a most rewarding occupation and as in Igboland, an elaborate ritual ceremony preceded the harvesting and consumption of new yams. For example in Ogurugu the senior elder of each quarter was expected to offer sacrifice at the shrine which was followed by a feast. It was only after the ceremony that new yams were declared fit for consumption. In the central and northern parts of Igalaland the term for the ritual presentation of first fruits was ekahiana. (J.S. Boston, 1968, p.217). There was, however, no yam deity similar to the one in southern Igala towns and northern Igboland.

Igbo influence was also evident in the prominence of age grade associations in the affairs of southern Igala communities. As was indicated previously, (p.22-3) age grade associations were important in Igbo social organisation, and, amongst the northern Igbo, were part of the administrative machinery. Among the Igal, age grades were not a characteristic feature of their social organisation, (N.A.K., K 2445 op.cit. p.42). But through contacts with their Igbo neighbours the southern Igala towns, especially in the Ibaji and Ogurugu area adopted age grades structured along the same lines as the Igbo, had the same names, performed identical functions and differed only slightly in composition; each age grade being made up of those born within a five year span (P.C. Dike, 1977, p.251). The Igala communities of Ogurugu, Asaba, Ojor, and Igga had age grades that were identical with those of the Igbo. For example in Ogurugu the names of the age grades in an ascending order were Isiagana, Ikolobia, Diuru Ikolobia, Irunato, and Ikenye. The first two took charge of the manual labour for the maintenance of the environment, the next two constituted the executive arm of the town's administration, and provided the warriors in times of emergency and the last, was responsible for legislation and the judicial processes in the town. (The politically significant age grades in Ibaji in an ascending order of importance were Agbanekolobia, Onu, Itali, Abakolobia or Achimere, and Nde Onu or Abo Igbenu, (P.C. Dike, 1977 pp.248-253; N.A.K. Lokprof 67/1920 op.cit. pp. 7-8 for Ibaji age grades, N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/29380 for the age grades in Ogurugu, Asaba, Ojor and Igga).

From the names of the age grades in the Anambra Basin Igbo dialect, (where age grades were very well developed) which are used among the Anambra Igbo communities, it seems likely that the Igala adopted the system from the Ibo. In Igboland age grades provided a valuable integrative mechanism within the town which cut across lineage and village loyalties and its origin could be associated with the emergence of the separate identities of

the various communities. Its acceptance by the Igala is most likely due to the increased communication with the Igbo in the seventeenth century.

Southern Igala communities also manifested Igbo influence in their possession of open title associations. In the Igala kingdom a great majority of the titles were hereditary and were the special privileges of particular descent groups; the few non-hereditary titles were held by officials in special positions. In northern Igboland there were ozo title groups which were open to any freeborn citizen who was capable of paying the requisite fees and possessed an upright character. Ozo titles were graded in an ascending order of prestige, privilege, and ritual status, and had to be taken in that order. The names of the different grades varied within various communities but generally they were split into two groups - the lower category which were less expensive and conferred no social status, and the higher ranks which were expensive and socially significant. The Igala derived their Ozo Tukes from the Anambra Basin Igbo, the upper category being called Nninwammadu, Asamo, Ogbuefi, and Ogbuanyinya in that order. (N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/28323 "Intelligence Report on Umueri Villages, Awka and Onitsha Divisions, Onitsha Province" (1932) by B.G. Stone pp. 12-17; N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/30986 "Intelligence Report on the Umunri Group, Awka Division, Onitsha Province (1935)" by H.J.S. Clark and P.P. Grey. pp. 7-10, See also D. Drode and G.I. Jones, 1950, pp. 19-20). It should be noted, however, that while ozo titles elevated one's social status they did not confer political authority, although the contributions of the title holders in the town assembly deliberations carried more weight than those of the ordinary citizens.

In the Ibaji district of Igalaland there were also open and graded ozo title associations. The socially significant titles were Amamwulu or Ibena, Utueke, Ogbuebuna, and Ogbuefi which had to be taken in that order. As in Igboland, probity of character was a basic requirement for admission and the title was a mark of respectability. The insignia of the title holders corresponded with those of their counterparts in Igboland. These included ankle cords on both legs, (owu ozo), an iron staff (alo), and a cow or horse tail (nza). They were in addition expected to take praise names, which in Ibaji were mostly Igbo. For example such names as akunna (father's wealth), Akunne (mother's wealth), and akukalia (abundance of wealth) were commonplace title names in Ibaji. (P.C. Dike, pp. 279-290; N.A.K. Lokprof 67/1920 op.cit. pp. 6:7). Among the Ebu Igala there were also open and graded titles; the socially significant titles including Ikenga, Ifejioku, Icheaka Dibia, and Okpala. (Oral account by Akpalla Aninye (c. 90 years), Joseph Idabo (c. 85 years), J.O. Onyah (60 years), and Eluojo Amola (70 years) interviewed at Ebu on 28th December, 1979).

Within the Ogurugu Igala communities there were only two major open titles, namely Ogbuefi and Ogbuanyinya with the latter as the higher title. This meant that there were no preceding lower titles that a candidate had to take as preliminaries. All that an Ogbuefi title candidate had to do was to make substantial gifts of yams to the head of the town who divided them among existing title holder and give a cow, which was slaughtered at the candidate's home for a general feast, after which he was entitled to wear string anklets and to take an honorific name. The same ceremonial procedure was required for admission to the Ogbuanyinya society except that instead of a cow a horse was slaughtered for the feast. (Oral account by Chief Tagbo Ukwella (Agu Onoja) and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979).

Also prevalent in Ibaji and Ogurugu were the two Igbo, title associations reserved for brave men. It was a mark of heroism in Igboland to have the head of an enemy killed in war, or to have killed leopard. In the riverain Igbo communities such men belonged to the Igbu society. In Ibaji and Ogurugu those who had killed leopards belong to the Ogbuagu society while those who had taken human heads were members of the Odogu Abia society. The Igbo names of these two societies indicate that they were most probably borrowed from the Igbo.

The inception of title taking ceremonies in Igboland must be assigned to a period when there was considerable increase in wealth for title taking ceremonies represented a conversion of surplus personal wealth into social prestige and status. (I. Nzimiro, 1972, pp. 34-36, 64, Ibaji see N.A.K. Lokprof 67/1920). It is significant that the Nri community which propagated the ozo title system among the Igbo also had an ancient tradition of contact with the Igala, thus the diffusion of ozo title societies among the Igala may have started well before the 17th century.

At the cultural level, Igala influence was evident in some parts of Igboland in the beliefs and customs associated with the life-cycle of an individual. For example, in most parts of Igboland the birth of twins was formerly regarded with abhorrence and they were destroyed. The Igbo believed that multiple births belonged to the lower animals and that its occurrence in human beings was a sign of disfavour by the spirits and a punishment, possibly for adultery. Owing to Igala influence, however, in some Nsukka Igbo towns like Enugu Ezike, Unadu, Ichi, and Obukpa, twin births were, as in Igala country, considered lucky. (Oral information by Chief Raymond Uroko Eyida (68 years) interviewed at Enugu Ezike on 17th January, 1979; C.K. Meek, 1937 pp. 295ff). Also cliteridectomy which was widely practised in Igboland but not in Igalaland was not performed on female children in those Nsukka communities. (C.K. Meek, 1930, para. 189). Again the marriage custom of many Nsukka Igbo towns, as a result of Igala influence, differed from those of the other Igbo communities. In Igboland marriages were contracted through the payment of dowry by the man's family to his prospective wife's family. In the Nsukka Igbo area, however, prospective husbands who could not afford the bride price were required to reside with their future father-in-laws where they worked in their farms for upwards of five to six years. At the end of this service the young man was qualified to leave with his wife for his home. This system which ethnographers have called "marriage by agricultural service" was an integral part of Igala culture and most likely was borrowed from there. (N.A.K.K. 2445, p. 41; C.K. Meek, 1930, ph.190)

The burial pattern which many Nsukka Igbo communities employ for their deceased rulers and atama priests has also been attributed to Igala influence. In Igala land, while an ordinary person was buried shortly after death in a rectangular grave pit, the funeral of a chief required elaborate rituals. The corpse underwent a process of evisceration followed by fumigation lasting in some cases until a successor was nominated. Eventually it was wrapped in a special black cloth (okpe) which was sent by the Ata for the burial of chiefs. The interment took place not in a rectangular grave but in a shaft and tunnel-chamber which in design was similar to an inverted funnel and spacious enough to accommodate several corpses. (N.A.K.K. 2445 p.42; M. Clifford, 1936, pp. 425-431). In the case of the Ata of Idah his body was placed in a canoe-shaped coffin decorated with symbolic brass figures and laid on iron supports in a similar grave. (M. Clifford, 1936, pp. 425-431; G.C. Monckton, 1927).

Such an elaborate burial rite was also practised by some Nsukka Igbo communities like Nibo, Amala and Eror. The Nibo example was typical of this form of cultural borrowing from the Igala, although Oral traditions in the town testify that their kingship institution was introduced from Nri. On the death of Nibo kings their bodies were allowed to dessicate and were then placed in canoe-shaped coffins and buried in a shaft and tunnel grave. (C.K. Meek, 1930, p.117-120, 121).

Other cultural borrowing included weaving, dyeing and basketry techniques. These arts were best developed in the northern part of Igboland and this has been attributed to Igala influence. (A.E. Afigbo, 1973, pp. 82-83, N.A.I. C.S.O. 26/30048 p.2). Two types of hand looms, the horizontal narrow loom and the vertical broad loom found in the Nsukka area are said to have been introduced by the Igala and Idoma (C.S. Okeke 1976, p.37). In the same way the use of circular baskets and calabash basins instead of the characteristic rectangular basket used in other parts of Igboland stemmed from Igala influence. (D. Forde and G.I. Jones, 1950, p.35).

Igbo cultural influence are also manifest in the settlement pattern of the southern parts of Igalaland. The northern Igala communities live in widely dispersed settlements. (N.A.K., K. 2445 p.33, J.S. Boston, 1968 p.4, and my own personal observations in January, 1979 during my fieldwork in the Igala country) but the southern ones dwell in more compact settlements that closely resemble those of their Igbo neighbours. According to Forde, D. and Jones, G.I. (1950 p.17)

'The typical Ibo settlement pattern consists of loose clusters of homesteads irregularly scattered along cleared paths radiating from a central meeting place of the village and/or village group, which contains the shrines and groves of the local earth deity or other chief spirit and also serves as the market.

Like the Igbo, the southern Igala groups of Ibaji, Ogurugu, and Adoru live in settlements that radiate from a centrally located space within which are built a meeting house, and one or more stands made of a number of log seats rising in rows which serve the dual purpose of relaxation and for watching masquerades perform during festivals.

Again in their house-types southern Igala towns manifest a close resemblance to Igbo houses. Like the Igbo houses they are rectangular and in this differs from the northern Igala round houses with conical thatched roofs (R.G. Armstrong, 1955, p.86-7), a feature appears to reflect influence in architectural design from the kingdom's northern neighbours. Furthermore, while central and northern Igala family compounds consist of clusters of huts dispersed around open spaces, the southern Igala compound like those the Igbo are generally surrounded by mud walls, and the characteristic northern Igbo settlement feature of a territorial division into 'upper' and 'lower' sections are absent.

Igbo influence on the southern Igala communities is also evident in their dialects. Igala has a close affinity with Yoruba although it is not a dialect of Yoruba. According to R.O. Silverstein (1973, p.1-3) who studied the Igala language, Igala dialects could be classed into two groups; the pure uninfluenced Igala called Igalowga or 'front Igala', and the adulterated Igala called Igalaubi or 'back Igala'; among the Igalaubi group are those dialects that have been influenced by the Igbo language. These include the Ibaji Igala dialect which shows a strong Igbo influence, and the Ebu Igala dialect which has been influenced by the western Igbo dialect.

It was not only in this way that Igbo language penetrated northwards, for many southern Igala communities are, unlike the neighbouring Igbo towns and villages bilingual in Igala and Igbo. In these Igala settlements the Igbo language served as a second language, and has been explained by N.W. Thomas (1914 part IV p. 5-6) as arising from a lopsided pattern of intermarriage in which more Igbo women were married to Igala men than the reverse; thus Igbo women according to him were the key disseminators of Igbo language in the area. E.H.M. Counsell and B.C. Cartland, as well as my Igala informants (N.A.K. Lokprof 1624, "Assessment Report on Adoru District Igala Division", by Messrs E.H.M. Counsell and B.C. Cartland (1941) p.2; Oral account by D.O. Enefolo (53 years) interviewed at Adoru 3rd January, 1979) attributed this imbalance in intermarriages to the Igala custom which forbade Igala women from working on farms and so encouraged Igala men to take Igbo wives to augment their labour force. Some other developments such as trade, and northward migration by the Igbo because of population pressure and land hunger would also have contributed to the bilingualism of the southern Igala towns.

Igbo cultural influence on southern Igala communities was also manifested in their style of dancing and in masquerading traditions. Early in this century in Ibaji it was reported that troupes of youths selected from younger age groups were sent into Igbo country annually for several weeks to learn new dances for their festivals. (N.A.K. Lokprof 67/1920 pp. 4-6; N.A.K. Lokprof 37/1929 "Customs and Beliefs etc., of the Igala Tribe (1927)", by R.S. Seton, enclosed in N.A.K. K. 2445). Consequently most Ibaji and Ogurugu Igala songs were sung in Igbo. In addition their dance pattern, unlike the more gentle Igala ones, came to resemble that of the Igbo in being distinctively more intricate, vigorous and acrobatic, as in the Atilogwu dance.

During the sojourns in Igboland, Igala dance troupes also purchased Igbo masquerade costumes and carved wooden head-dresses for their home societies. It was in this way that Ibaji and Ogurugu masquerades came to resemble those of the northern Igbo (N.A.K. Lokprof 67/1920 op.cit. pp. 5-6). The most important feature of northern Igbo masquerades were the prominent head-dresses with buffalo horns and numerous symbolic carved objects. The traditional costumes consisted of suits of strong cloth covered with raffia, small brass bells and other metal objects to emphasise their shaggy and terrifying appearance (R.N. Henderson 1972 p. 348-52; J.S. Benson 1960 p. 58-59). Igala masqueraders on the other hand were entirely covered with cloth on which cut-out designs were sewn and small brass bells were attached; there were not as striking as those of the Igbo but which fitted like helmets over the wearer's head and thus resembled Yoruba masks such as the Gelede or Egugun head-dresses. (K.C.Murray 1949 p. 85-92).

To further illustrate Igbo influence on Igala masquerade traditions, the presence of the Omabe masquerade cults in southern Igala communities should be discussed. Among the Nsukka Igbo communities there were two outstanding cults, Omabe and Odo; some towns have the Odo cult, others the Omabe and some having both, but where both were found only one was employed for disciplinary functions. They were each symbolised by a masquerade that appeared and resided for a while in different towns, either annually or triennially. During their stay citizens were expected to be of good behaviour, and evildoers since the masquerade's last visit were warned to correct their ways or be punished with instant death. The appearance of the Odo and Omabe masquerades was celebrated with a general feast. It was believed that any misconduct during the visit could lead to a bad harvest, famine and many deaths (C.K. Meek 1930 ph. 240-249). In general the Omabe cult was practised by most Nsukka communities north of Opi, while the Odo cult was prominent in the southern half of the area. Thus villages in which the Odo cult was dominant were referred to as Ndi and Igbodo or Oha Odo by the more northerly towns, while the area in which Omabe cult predominates was called Igbomaba. (N.A.E. OP 1020 ONPROF 8/1/4724 "Intelligence Report on the Villages of Ukehe, Oyoho, Ochima, Ikolo, Aku, Ohebe, Umuna, Ngalakpu, Umunku, and Idoha in the Nsukka, Division, (1934)", by J. Bamby, pp. 5-6). However, the Oido cult was not restricted to the Nsukka area as it was also in the Agbaja towns in Udi Division.

In the Ibaji and Ogurugu Igala communities also there were Omabe masquerades but these had no elaborate rituals concerning their appearance in the towns, it was simply one of a group of masquerades employed by the elders to discipline recalcitrant citizens when the need arose. (Chief Tagbo Ukwella (80 years) and other Ogurugu elders interviewed at Ogurugu on 12th January, 1979). For example in Ibaji, Omabe, Odeyi, Eti-mokwu and Ejigwu masquerades belonged to the same group and were used for social control of the Achimere who has been described as "the security chief of an Ibaji village". Thus the executive role of the Omabe masquerade was adopted by the southern Igala communities while its ritual function as the guardian spirit of the community was dropped. (P.C. Dike 1977 p. 290-295).

The Igbo smithing tradition with its centre at Awka also had a significant impact, probably before the 17th century, on the material culture of the Igala kingdom even when the Igala had their own smelting and smithing tradition. According to J.S. Boston (1964 p. 46) the Awka Smiths possessed higher "techniques and organization" than their Igala fellow craftsmen and this facilitated their movements into the area. The movement of Awka smiths into the Igala parts of the kingdom such as the Bassa Komo area near the Niger-Benue Confluence. (N.A.K. S.N.P. 10: 30p/1919 "Munshi Province Dekina Division Bassa Komo District Assessment Report on", by F.F.W. Byng-Hall, p.11). The Ibaji and Ogurugu Igala, owing to their location on the Niger and Anambra floodplains, which were devoid of iron or any other ore deposits, were very dependent on Awka smiths for their metal goods and the proximity of these Igala communities to northern Igboland accounts for the widespread practice of using metal ornaments. Among the northern Igbo communities it was traditional for women to wear brass bangles and anklets to profusion as symbols of affluence and social status, all manufactured by Awka smiths. This practice was adopted by the southern Igala communities. (N.A.K., K 2445 op.cit. p. 31; N.A.K. Lokprof 67/1920 op.cit., p.4.). Both the Igala and the northern Igbo use iron gongs as musical instruments and for summoning village meetings, the Igbo have both a single and a double form of iron gong, while the Igala have only a single-chambered type. However, it is interesting to note that double iron gongs

of the Igbo type occurred in Igala villages located within twenty or thirty miles of the Igbo border (J.S. Boston 1964 p.44).

Another common feature found among the Igbo and Igala was the four-day week associated with markets. In Igboland the four market days are called Eke, Oye, Afor and Nkwo in that order while the Igala names are Eke, Ede, Afor and Nkwo. The Igbo four-day week was rooted in their cosmological tenets for they believe that the sun and the moon traversed the sky in intersecting paths which divide the earth into four quarters. These quadrants are associated with the Igbo week and with markets. This division is also found among the Edo-speaking peoples of Nigeria. (R.N. Henderson 1972 p. 14; W.R.G. Horton 1956). However, it is absent among the Yoruba-speaking peoples who include the Igala. One could therefore surmise that the four-day week in Igala country was derived from the Igbo or from the Edo. The more likely source of derivation would appear to be the Igbo because of their intimate and long-lasting commercial relations with their Igala neighbours and R.G. Armstrong (1955 p.93) working among the Idoma, who live to the east of the Igala, affirms that "the four-day names are derived from Ibo". It is of interest to note that among the Igbo, Edo, and Igala peoples, Eke was regarded as a rest day in which people abstained from work. (Oral account by Gideon A. Ochidi (58 years) interviewed at Idah on 5th January, 1979; J. Egharevba, *op.cit.* p. 82).

Personal names in both regions show cultural borrowing. Personal names borne by some Igbo are good testimonies of Igala influence, these include Abutu and Idoko (the names of two of the ancestral founders of Igala kingdom), Onoja and Oboli (from the name of the legendary Igala warrior), Ata and Asadu (the titles of the two most important Igala officials) and Onu (the title of an Igala district head), other names include Adama, Oigbedo, Ameh, Ajogu and Ojoma. In Southern Igala communities most of the people bore Igbo personal names; such Igbo names as Okolo, Igbokwe, Igwedimma, Chukwurah, Tagbo, and Obodoechina were very common and but for the fact that they speak Igala it is easy for a visitor to mistake the inhabitants for Igbo immigrants who has been linguistically absorbed by the Igala. While there were some Igbo immigrants in the southern Igala villages, the bulk of the population were Igala indigenes.

Outside the borderland, Igala influence seemed to have penetrated deeper into Igbo areas along the River Niger. In this area a number of Igbo towns have traditions which state that their kingship institutions were derived from the Igala kingdom; such towns include Odekpe, Oko, and Osomari. Although these communities were of mixed Igbo and Igala composition, the right of succession to the throne was vested on the Igala lineages; thus in Osomari the Igalalineage of Ugolo had the privilege of providing candidates for the throne. The title of the king was Atamanya, a title which echoed that of the Igala monarch and points to its source. According to Osomari elders Atamanya meant "the great Ata" and was a way of emphasizing their independence from the Igala potentate. (Oral information by Robert Olisa, Nzedegwu 11, the Atamanya of Osomari (82 years) interviewed at Osomari on 27th December, 1979). However, kingship in Osomari appeared to have been integrated into the Igbo title system for the other two villages of Isiolu and Umuonyiogwu also had their own rulers and only recognized the Atamanya as a primus inter pares. In addition qualifications for such titles came to be based on wealth and influence rather than hereditary principles as in Igala land. (I. Nzimiro 1972 p. 84).

It is significant to note that some riverain Igbo polities which did not derive their monarchical institutions from Idah borrowed the regalia of the Igala king. In Onitsha, whose monarchs have traditions of Benin origin, it was stated that the king's regalia was brought from Idah in the reign of Obi Omozele (R.N. Henderson 1972 p.86-9), but the brass royal sword (abani) which was among the items of the royal regalia brought from Idah was indubitably Benin-derived. (J. Egharewba, 1960, p. 10). This would seem to show that aspects of Benin culture were introduced into parts of Igboland not through the western Igbo area but through the Igala. Indeed Omozele's predecessor, Aroli, was said to have been brought up at Idah before he returned to ascend the throne at Onitsha. It is noteworthy that Igala traditions claim that in earlier times the kings of Aboh had to spend three months at Idah receiving instructions in courtly procedures and the art of government before their installation (J.S. Boston 1968 p.54). This tradition was not corroborated at Aboh which claims a Benin origin for its monarchy. However, Onitsha account and the Nupe Tsoede traditions (N.F. Nadel 1942 p.73) of the early sixteenth century would appear to confirm that some states did send their princes to Idah for political training.

With regards to Onitsha, it is noteworthy that its lack of control of canoe transport meant a reliance on the riverain kingdoms of Igala and Aboh for the supply of highly desired European goods including firearms. It was, therefore, economically expedient for Onitsha to have kinship connections with these kingdoms. Thus Onitsha preferred having marriage links with the riverain kingdoms than with their hinterland neighbours (R.N. Henderson 1972 p. 412).

Igala movement downstream into Igbo territory contributed to the emergence of a distinct cultural entity which the Igbo called olu. The underlying distinction between Igbo and olu was aptly defined by R.N. Henderson (1972 p. 41).

"The contrast of Igbo-na-olu...involved three independent but often coinciding features: olu meant riverain or riverain-derived, slave-dealing, kingdom associated peoples; Igbo meant upland, slave-providing, kingship-lacking populations".

Within the olu cultural group itself there existed a further differentiation classified as ogbaru and ozizor. Those known as ogbaru had arrived at their present homes following the downward current; those known as ozizor had arrived by struggling against the current. Thus the two categorizations encapsulate the historical phenomenon of downstream and upstream migrants along the Niger with the ogbaru composed largely of Igala emigrants while the ozizor came mainly from the Aboh kingdom. (Oral account by Robert Olisa, Nzedegwu 11, the Atamanya of Osomari (82 years), interviewed at Osomari on 27th December, 1979).

It could be seen from the above analysis that Igbo-Igala relations gave rise to bilateral influences between them. The notion that such borrowings were largely unidirectional affecting the Igbo is not borne out by the available evidence.

## NOTES ON THE SOURCES

The information used in writing this volume depended on written and oral sources.

### Written Sources

Considerable general information about the culture, early history, traditional social and political organisation of the Igbo and the Igala exists in the accounts of European explorers, missionaries, anthropologists and ethnographers. Apart from these, the colonial officials who worked in various parts of Igboland and Igala kingdom in the early part of this century left informative records. In addition, there is an ever-increasing body of literature on both peoples. The written sources consulted have been broadly divided into two categories, namely, primary and secondary sources.

#### i. Primary Sources

##### i. Government Records

These consist of government intelligence and assessment reports compiled by the District Officers and stored in the National Archives at Ibadan, Enugu, and Kaduna. The reporters on the Igbo are found in Ibadan and Enugu, while those on the Igala are located in Kaduna.

##### ii. Missionary Papers

These are mainly the reports by missionaries of the Church Missionary Society who worked in Igbo and Igala countries in the Society Archives in London, and are also available in the microfilm section of the University of Ibadan Library.

##### iii. Foreign Office Confidential Prints

These are found in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, listed under West Africa.

### Published Sources

They are mainly the accounts of European and African historians and travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and published syntheses. Eight unpublished theses are so listed in the bibliography.

### Oral Sources

Oral sources have been used in this study to supplement the written accounts and to cross-check the accuracy of the latter. For the purpose of collecting oral information the author undertook fieldwork in Idah, Nsukka, Ogidi and the surrounding towns. The following interviewing technique was used.

On arrival in a community I located the home of the ruler or some other important person. There I introduced myself and gave a brief description of my work. He then summoned other elders and the interviews began. From my initial informants I was directed to other knowledgeable elders in the town and beyond. In this way it was possible to conduct both group and individual interviews.

My interviews in Igboland were conducted in Igbo language. But in Igala country I had to employ the assistance of interpreters if my informants could not speak English or Igbo. This was not always necessary because many Igala elders are also fluent in Igbo language, and this facilitated my interviews. Whenever there was no communication problem I sought the consent of my informants to make use of my tape recorder. The halting nature of the interviews conducted through interpreters dictated that the information be taken mainly in note form. The recorded interviews were later transcribed into written form. There follows a list of the places visited and people interviewed.

# LIST AND PARTICULARS OF INFORMANTS

Place of Interview	Date of Interview	Informant	Particulars of Informant
Idah	January 3, 1979	Mr. D.O. Enefola	Aged 53 years, Principal, Bassa Nge Anglican Grammar School, Gboko.
	January 3, 1979	Mr. P.E. Okwoli	Aged 45 years. The author of <u>A Short History of Igala</u>
	January 4, 1979	Messrs. Peter A. Achema	Aged about 51 years. The Achadu of Igala.
		Ainko Adebo Awulu Ata	Aged about 40 years. Aged about 50 years.
	January 4, 1979	Mr. Emmanuel Kadiri Edime	Aged about 40 years. Headmaster, Qua Ibo Mission School, Idah.
	January 5, 1979	Mr. John Unubi Onoji	Aged about 72 years.
	January 5, 1979	Mr. Gideon A. Ochidi	Aged about 58 years The author of <u>The Original History Of Amonachadu and the Connection with Ata.</u>
Nsukka	January 7, 1979	Mr. Nathaniel Ugwu	Aged about 40 years. A civil servant.
	January 7, 1979	Messrs. Joseph Ozhiko	Aged about 36 years. A civil servant.
		Chukwuma Ozhioko	A farmer.
	January 8, 1979	Atama Iyi	Aged about 82 years. A shrine priest.
	January 9, 1979	Atama Ezoguda	Aged about 100 years. A shrine priest.
Ankpa	January 10, 1979	Messrs. Ame Adama, Oguche, Obida, John Atkolo	Aged 60 years.  Aged 55 years.

Ogurugu	January 12, 1979	Chief Tagbo Ukwella, and the following elders: Dominmic Neli, Onwubiko Agbata, Okoye Akubo, Onuwuachu Igwedimma	Aged about 80 years. The ruler of Ogurugu  Aged about 50 years
Nkpologwu	January 13, 1979	Messrs. Amadizi Ekota, Okechukwu Aniebonam, Michael Anwuduzi	Aged about 90 years Aged about 52 years Aged 60 years.
Obimo	January 13, 1979	Mr. David Ugwuoke  Madam Jemima Ugwuoke,  Chief Dennis Ezenweze  Bennett Okoli	Aged 46 years Retired civil servant and Retired civil servant and ruler of Obimo Aged 50 years. A civil servant.
Enugu Ezike	January 17, 1979	Chief Raymond Urko Eyida	Age about 68 years.
Eha Alumona	January 17, 1979	Mr. Stanislaus Nwamba	Aged about 80 years Retired civil servant
Aguleri	January 22, 1979	Chief Alphonsus Ezeudu Idigo III	Aged 64 years Ruler of Aguleri
	January 22, 1979	Messrs. Michael Meze Idigo, Mathias Nchekwube, Robert Aghanti, Ambrose Kwazu	Aged 69 years Aged 70 years Aged 60 years Aged 65 years
Aguleri	January 22, 1979	Chief Ogolo Iwoba	Aged 60 years
Umuleri	January 22, 1979	Chief Nelson Okoye	Aged 58 years. Ruler of Umuleri
Agukwu-Nri	January 23, 1979	Messrs. Okeke Okonkwo, Nwankwo Uliagba, Okoye Nwankwo, Festus Tabansi,	Aged 75 years Aged 75 years Aged 80 years Aged 54 years

		and Tabansi Udene	Aged about 100 years Ruler of Agukwu-Nri.
Onitsha	January 24, 1979	Chief G.H.N. Nzegwu	Aged 66 years Retired civil servant.
	January 24, 1979	Messrs. Daniel Oranefo Azikiwe, Chike Anyaegbunam	Aged 69 years Retired civil servant Aged 40 years. Civil Servant.
Akili- Ozizor	December 27, 1979	Mr. Francis Egeonu Aniche.	Aged 52 years Retired civil servant.
Osomari	December 27, 1979	Chief Robert Olisa Nzedegwu II	Aged 82 years. The ruler of Osomari. Retired civil servant.
Ebu	December 28, 1979	Messrs Akpala Aninye, Joe Idabo, J.O. Onyah Eluojo Amola Messrs Obiechei	Aged about 83 years Aged about 82 years Aged about 59 years Aged about 70 years
	December 28, 1979	Osadebay, G.J.U. Ojeh, J.I. Ojeh	Aged about 80 years Aged 74 years Aged 70 years
Illah	December 28, 1979	Mr. Anthony I. Nwulu	Aged 60 years.
Okò	December 29, 1979	Messrs. John Uloho Simeon Otihi	Aged 53 years. Aged 55 years.
	December 29, 1979	Obi Oputa I	Aged 64 years The ruler of Oko.
		Chief A.E. Daiké	Aged 71 years Retired civil servant.
Awka	January 2, 1980	Chief Obuora Nebe	Aged 60 years The ruler of Awka.
	January 3, 1980	Nwokoye Nonyelu	Aged 90 years. A veteran blacksmith also known as Nwokoye Idah.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### ABBREVIATIONS

J.H.S.N.	Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria
J.A.H.	Journal of African History
S.J.A.	Southwestern Journal of Anthropology
J.P.A.I.	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
F.O.C.P.	Foreign Office Confidential Print
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society
N.A.I.	National Archives Ibadan
N.A.E.	National Archives Enugu
N.A.K.	National Archives Kaduna

## PRIMARY SOURCES

### GOVERNMENT RECORDS

#### National Archives Ibadan (N.A.I.)

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- C.S.O. 26/28280 Umuigwedo clan of Awka and Onitsha Divisions, Onitsha Province (1932), by Bridges A.F.B.
- C.S.O. 28/28323 Intelligence Report on Umueri Villages, Awka and Onitsha Divisions, Onitsha Province (1932), by Stone, B.G.
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- C.S.O. 26/29603 Eketekete Group of Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province (1934), by Dixon, J.
- C.S.O. 26/30048 Intelligence Report on the people of Enugu Ezike, Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province (1935), by Johnson, V.K.
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- OP 363A ONPROF 8/1/4586 Intelligence Report on Umulokpa area, Onitsha Division by Tovey, D.C.E.
- OP 1020 ONPROF 8/1/4724 Intelligence Report on the villages of Ukehe, Oyoho, Ochima, Ikolo, Aku, Ohebe, Umuna, Ngfalakpu, Umunku, and Idoha in the Nsukka Division by Bamby, J.
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- S.N.P. 7: 5315/1907 Bassa Province - Okpoto and Igara tribes - Laws and Customs by Byng-Hall, F.N.W.
- S.N.P. 10: 16p/1921 Munchi Province - Okwoga Division Assessment Report (1921) by Brooke, N.J.
- S.N.P. 10: 30p/1919 Munshi Province, Dekina Division. Bassa Komo District Assessment Report by Captain F.F.W. Byng-Hall.
- S.N.P. 10: 545p.1918 Munshi Province - Dekina Division, Dekina District Assessment Report by Captain F.F.W. Byng-Hall.
- S.N.P. 17: K 2013 Ethnological notes on the tribes in Idah Division, Kabba Province (1926), by Captain J. Noel Smith
- S.N.P. 17: K 2445 Anthropological and historical notes on the Igala peoples (1923) by Keith Officer.

Lokoprof 1624	Assessment Report on Adoru District Igala Division, by E.H.M. Counsell, and B.C. Cartland.
Lokoprof 1625	Assessment Report on Igala Ogwa District Igala Division, by E.H.M. Counsell (1941).
Lokoprof 67/1920	Assessment Report on Ibaji District (1920) by N.J. Broke.
Lokoprof 245A	Ata Gala bestowal of titles by.

Missionary Papers (C.M.S. Archives, London)

C.M.S. CA3/04/754	Report on Idda Station, 1867, by Bishop S.A. Crowther
C.M.S. CA3/09/4	The Civil War at Onitsha, June 1872, by John A. Buck, Native Catechist Onitsha.
C.M.S. CA3.030/1	Letter by Revd. Samuel Perry, 16th September, 1872.

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## APPENDIX I

### Igala King List and Genealogy

The numbers correspond to the order of graves in the royal burial ground.

Abutu Eje) Exact relationship and order of  
Ebelejonu) succession uncertain  
Agenapoje)

Idoko

Ayagba

Akumabi		Akogu (4)	Ocholi (5)	Agada (6)	Arame Ayidoko Onuche
Amacho (7)	Itode Aduga (8)	Ogalla (9)	Idoko Adegbe (10)		
Onuche (11)	Amocheja (1835-65) (13)	Ekalaga (12)	Aku Odib (1856-70) (14)		
Okoliko (15)	Ocheje Onkpa (1901-3) (17)	Amaga (1876-1900) (16)	Oboni (1905-11) (18)		
Oguche Akpa (1911-19) (19)	Obaje Ochejo (1926-45) (21)	Atabor (1919-26) (20)	Ame (1946-56) (22)		
	Alii (1957-)				

Source: Extracted from J.S. Boston "Oral Tradition and the History of Igala", J.A.Ha. x, I (1969) p.34.

APPENDIX II

SUCCESSION TO THE OFFICE OF OBI OF ONITSHA

EZE CHIMA (1)

B. (Umudei or Okebunabo)

A. (Umuezeoroli)

(Umudei)

(Ogbeabu)

(Ogbembubu)

(Ogbeodogwu)

Chimaukwu (2)

Tasia (4) Chima Ogbuefi (6)

Navia (3)

Chimezie (5)

Ezeoroli (7)

Agadagba Omozele Olisa Chimedie Diakany  
(8) (10) (9)

Ijelekpe (11)

Udogwu (12)

Akazue (13)  
(1840-1873)

Diali (14)  
(1873)

Okosi I (16)  
(1901-1931)

Anazonwu (15)  
(1874-1899)

Okosi II (17)  
(1935-1961)

Onyejekwe (18)  
(1962-1970)

Okagbue (19)  
(1970-)

(Lineage names are shown in brackets)

Source: Extracted from I. Nzimiro, Studies in Ibo Political Systems,  
(University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1972,) p.196.

### APPENDIX III

Legends of Onoja Oboni of Ogurugu. Extract from Notes on Kabba Province. (OP 398/1926 ONPROF 7/13/122).

#### Notes on the History of Ogurugu-Nsukka Division

Abatamu, the founder of the town, was a hunter born at Adaba in Onitsha Division. In the course of his hunting he came to where Ogurugu is now and decided to stay there. (He apparently had a wife or wives but little seems to be known of them except that his progeny now form Abatamu quarter). He continued hunting and whilst in the Idah country he met a woman Ebuli, stayed with her for a time and returned to Ogurugu. The result of this meeting was the birth of a son to Ebuli whom she named Onoja-Aboli.

The latter grew up and was scorned by his associates as being fatherless, and as he grew older he asked his mother as to the whereabouts of his father. She told him his father's name was Abatamu and she understood that he lived at Ogurugu. She gave Onoja-Abolia a ring which she said had been given to her by his father, and if he, Onoja, took the ring and found Abatamu, the latter would recognise it.

Onoja then went in search of Ogurugu. Apparently by that time he had grown to be a tremendously big man physically, and on arriving at Ogurugu he met a man who, immediately on seeing him, knelt down to show him homage. Onoja found that this man was Abatamu and made himself known to him by showing him the ring. Abatamu recognised it and acclaimed him as his son, giving him a plot of land called Obia to live on. Onoja stayed there for some time, then he had a dispute with the other sons of Abatamu, fought with them and killed most of them. Abatamu was naturally annoyed at this and told Onoja that in future he would not have him living so near and made him move his house to a safe distance (now Ati-Idah). The two quarters Abatamu and Ati-Idah were formed in this way, and Obia became waste and has been so ever since.

Onoja-Aboli was a warrior and a giant. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He was evidently of a roving nature, and after moving to Ati-Idah he went all over the country raiding villages everywhere, bringing back captives from each one and putting them on land at Ogurugu to live. It was these captives who founded the other seven quarters of Ogurugu.

Rumour has it that Onoja made all these raids singlehanded without assistance from anyone. He was feared everywhere on account of his stature and strength. Tradition also has it that Onoja died suddenly by his own act. He contracted yaws which he was unable to cure and so grew tired of life. He had a huge pit dug, and when ready, he assembled a number of his captives and jumped with them into the pit. By his order it was filled in and all were buried alive. Onoja's sceptre was planted there and the founder's juju was made, which is recognised to this day by all Ogurugu. The oldest man in Ati-Idah is Eze of the town and Atama-Onoja-Aboli.

The custom has always been that an Atah of Idah, on assuming the Atirate should always consult the Onoja-Aboli juju in order to be successful and just in his reign. The Atah would send one of his eunuchs with a messenger to the juju priest. They would take a male slave, a female slave, a dog, a ram and a fowl. The dog, ram and fowl were sacrificed to the juju, and the slaves remained slaves of the juju and kept the place clean. The Atah's eunuch also remained with the juju and stayed there until he died. This was the custom up to the reign of the last two Atahs who have not consulted the juju.

The history above which was given by the elders of Ogrugu, varies in parts from information gathered from Igaras I have met. They agree that Onoja was a giant and had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. That he was a warrior and singlehanded raided towns in the Igara, Okpoto and Ibo countries and took his captives to Ogrugu where he finally died. But they state that he was an Atah or Idah or next in succession; that being a giant and of a roving nature he grew tired of the humdrum life at Idah and went all over the country raiding and conquering towns, with such success that there was little more to conquer on this earth. So he decided to attempt the conquest of the gods above, and to that end he had a high tower erected; but before it reached the height he wanted it, it fell to earth and the project was abandoned. They say the ruins are still in existence, but it is not known exactly where they are.

Onoja is said among other things to have attempted to stop the flow of the Niger, with little success.

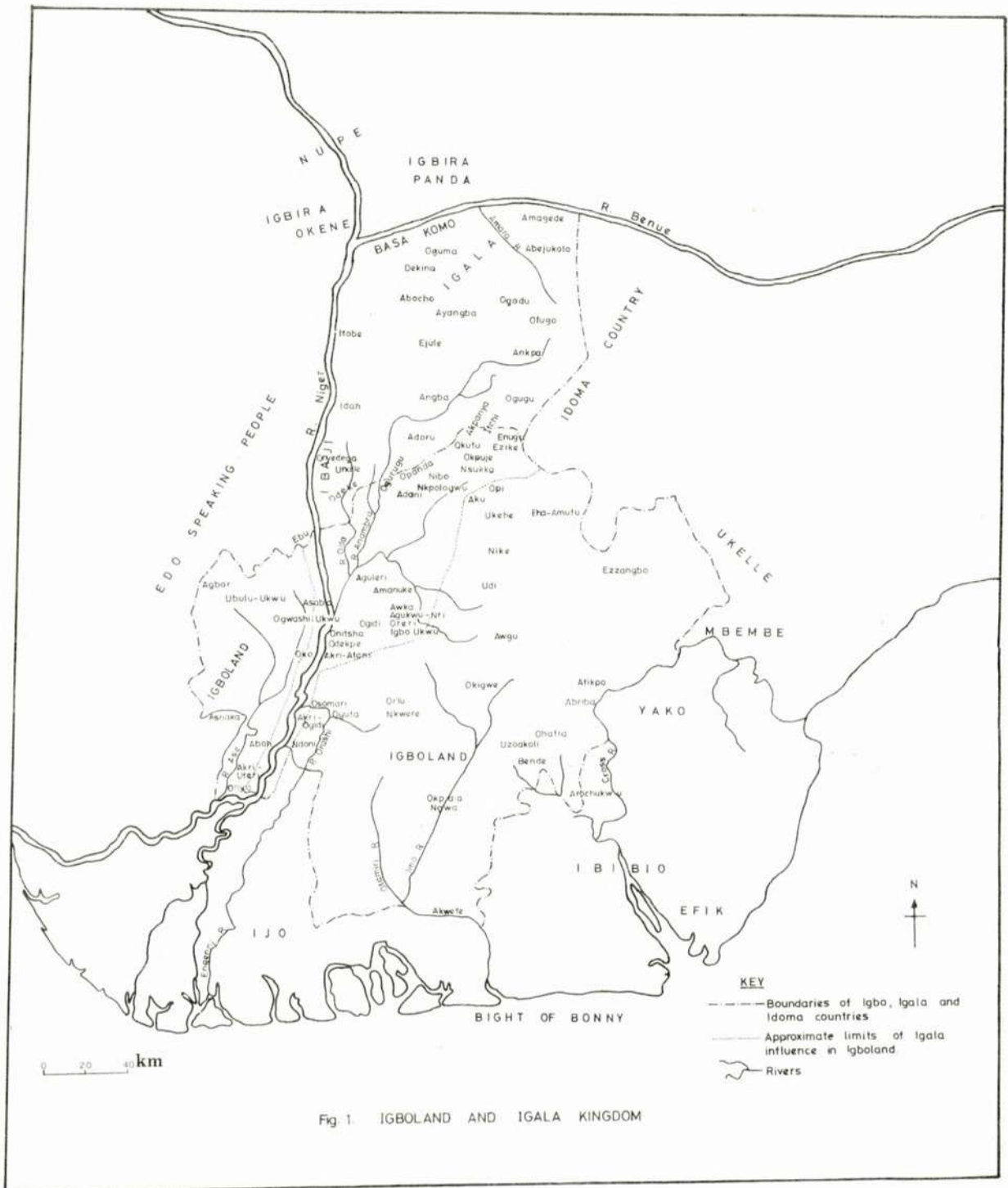
Finally, he determined to try his strength against the powers under the earth, and at Ogrugu, whilst his slaves were digging a pit sufficiently deep for him to come to grips, the walls fell in and he and his slaves were buried alive.

There is a similarity between the two tales, and the tradition of the Igaras that he was an Atah supplies a reason for succeeding Atahs consulting the Onoja-Aboli juju. There is no question that they did so. To my knowledge, when the present Atah assumed the Atirate he made overtures to Ogrugu saying that he wished to consult the juju. Nothing came of it, apparently, perhaps because the fee of 20 asked by Ogrugu was too heavy; but it has always been a genuine belief that an Atah could not reign successfully without consulting the juju, which the people regard as the spirit of their ancestor.

Onoja-Aboli was undoubtedly a warrior and raided these towns. His name is heard in different parts of this Division as one who has raided them; chiefly amongst the Ihaka towns, but possibly where the reference is made elsewhere to raids by the Atah of Idah, he is confused with Onoja-Aboli.

Ogrugu say that the juju is consulted only because he was looked upon as a kind of superman - almost a god. If this is so, it does not appear why the juju is not consulted by other towns and not merely by Ogrugu and the Atahs of Idah.

Note: "Aboli", I understand, is an Igara word with the same meaning as "Dan-duru" in Hausa, which signifies, to use a more polite expression than the literal equivalent, a bastard.



Adapted from road map of Nigeria, Federal Surveys, Lagos

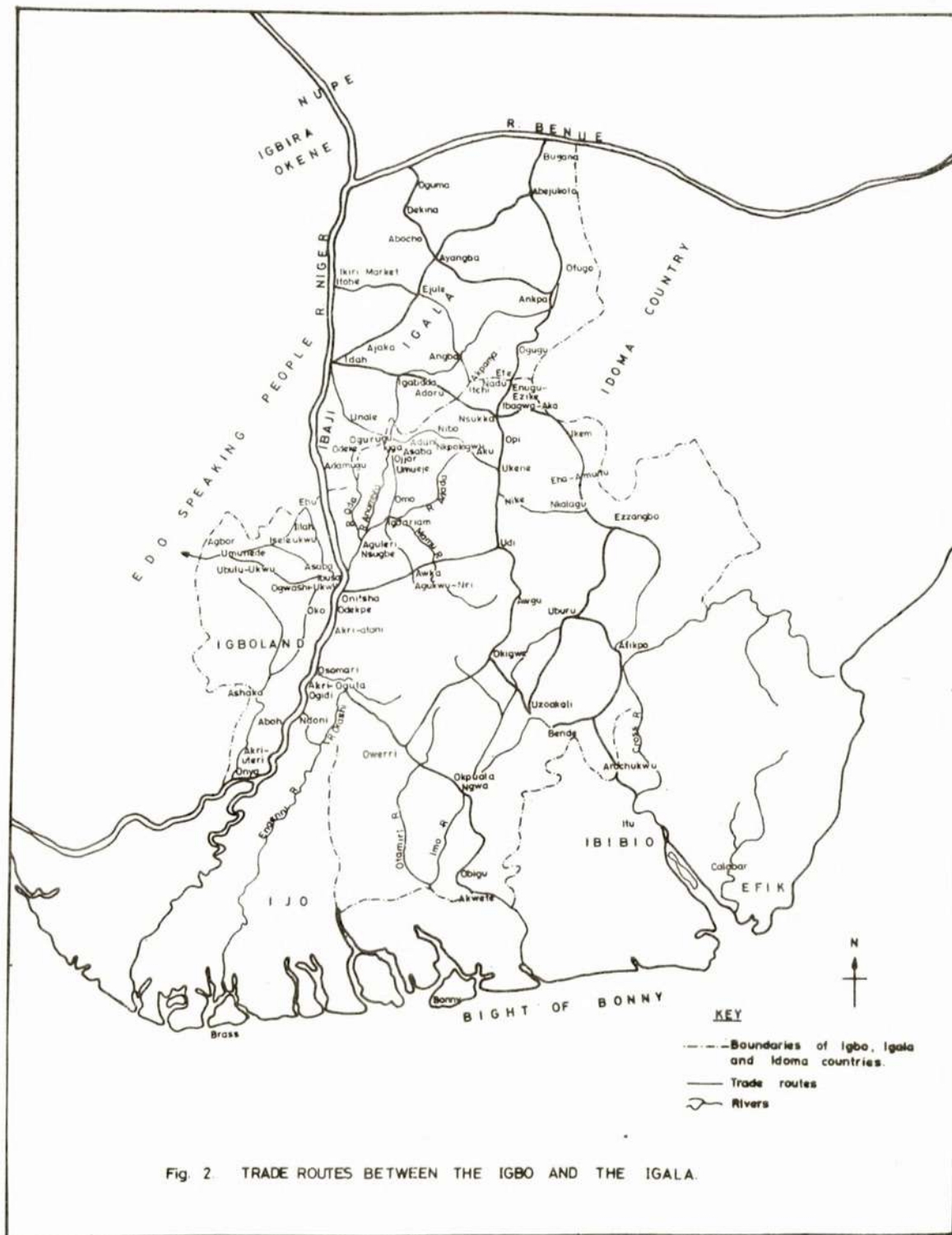
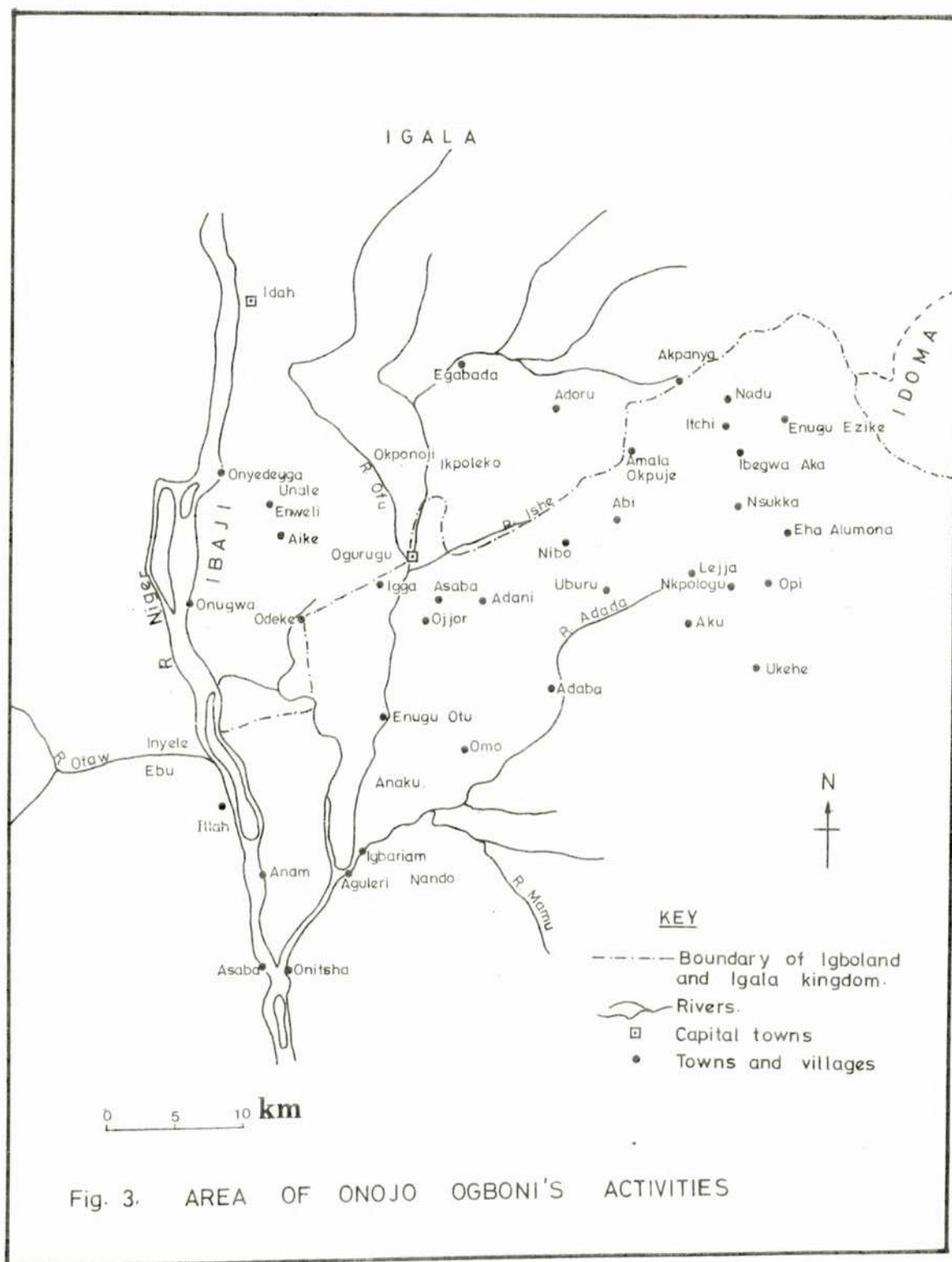


Fig. 2 TRADE ROUTES BETWEEN THE IGBO AND THE IGALA.



Adapted from Kabba Province Map, Federal Surveys, Lagos.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding two Parts we have examined much evidence for Igbo - Igala relations over time and space. It was argued that contacts between the two people have existed for a long time, preceding from traditions of origin of the Umueri group in Igboland, and the Achadu clan in the Igala and the arrival of the Jukun ruling family in Idah at the end of the seventeenth century. Onitsha and Igala traditions also indicate that the connection had ancient roots and that while Igala fishermen moved southwards down the Niger, the Nri ritual influence from Igboland spread northwards. In addition, archaeological evidences from Igbo-Ukwu, dated to the ninth century A.D. points to commercial relations to the north and makes it likely that the Igala country was one of the routes by which objects and ideas were transmitted. Linguistic evidence claims that the Igbo and the Igala have lived to the east of the Niger for some 4,000 years, and 2,000 years respectively and these dates argue for the long duration of contacts between both peoples.

The inception of the overseas trade in the 16th century greatly increased the commercial relations between the two groups. This generated new patterns of interaction and intensified the older ones. The Igala, who had long been middlemen in the distribution of goods from the savannah belt to the forest regions, controlled trade in the northern part of the Lower Niger Basin, and the Iboh of the Aboh kingdom dominated the southern half. To the east of the Niger, in the borderland of the Anambra Basin and beyond, commercial exchanges took place between the Igala and the Igbo along the land routes, and the trading activities resulted in an increase in inter-marriages, and migrations in both directions. Some new settlements were established, particularly along the Niger, while older communities received new immigrants.

The new trade generated conflict between the Igbo and the Igala. The Igala town of Ogurugu became a major outpost for slave raids on surrounding Igbo and Igala communities, but this development, it is argued, was an independent action from the town which was not directed from Idah. Furthermore, it was pointed out that such raids were not unique to Ogurugu, but were commonplace among the Lower Niger states like Aboh, and Osomari. The location of the states along the waterways which were the major trade routes, and the demands for slaves by the Europeans, provided the impulse for the attacks, but it is significant that there are no traditions in either Idah or Igboland of attacks being organised from the Igala capital. It would, therefore, be incorrect to attribute Igala influences in Igboland wholly to the disruptive raids from Ogurugu. Again it was pointed out that the period of conflict was relatively short in the prolonged contacts between the Igbo and the Igala, and so does not deserve the prominence it occupies in the literature.

Lastly, the consequences of centuries of migrations, commercial relations and intermarriages that along the Niger, Igala influence on Igbo riverain communities was more pronounced than that of the Igbo on the Igala. This could be explained by the numerical superiority of the Igala merchants in the Niger commerce, as well as their longer tradition of activities on that river. Igala influence in this area was mainly cultural, with the egugun cult serving as the symbol of their ancestral heritage and an unifying force. Eastwards, among the Ibaji and Ogurugu Igala inhabitants

of the Anambra river basin, Igbo influence was prominent. The dense forest vegetation that lay between the floodplain and the drier parts of the Igala country to the north did not encourage close communication and this may have contributed to the Igbo orientation and to acculturation with the Aguleri and Anam Igbo inhabitants of the area. It is also noteworthy that the Awka smiths and Nri priests operated in large numbers in this part of Igala country.

In the Nsukka borderland where the open savannah vegetation facilitated communication, Igala influence was again prominent and the Igala merchants were the major source of foreign goods and ideas. From Idah, European manufactured goods purchased from the south and horses from the north, were distributed into the Nsukka area. The Igala merchants thus had a controlling influence in the area, and this enhanced the status of Idah as a commercial and cultural metropolis. This largely accounts for the fact that it was mainly from this part of Igboland that rulers visited Idah to obtain titles. Unlike in the Igbo riverain area where Igala influence was predominantly cultural, in the Nsukka area it was predominantly political.

Indeed, there are two interesting themes in Igbo-Igala relations. The first was the relationship between the riverain communities and their hinterland neighbours at a time when the waterways were major trade routes. These communities served as collection depots for the products of the hinterland, and also as centres of innovation for their neighbours. Because of their geographical location they also responded to the demands of the overseas trade and engaged in raids on their neighbours. The significance of Idah, and Ogurugu during the period of our study revolved around these factors.

The second theme was the relationship between the centralized Igala polity and largely segmentary Iboh societies. This difference in political organisation contributed to the admiration which many Igbo societies had for the ruler of Igala kingdom. With respect to Igala kingdom it was argued that common language was not equated with political integration and the existence of semi-autonomous communities engaged in activities that were harmful to the state was noteworthy. The level of political cohesion in these kingdoms at present were sometimes attained only as a result of British administrative policies. This caveat is important for the appreciation of intra and inter-group relations in pre-colonial times.

Within a different context, this study offered new evidence in the controversy about the impact of the slave trade. It has been shown that along the Niger and Anambra rivers the slave trade greatly enhanced the political influence of Aboh, Osomari, Idah, and Ogurugu. On the other hand, it was evident that the former peaceful co-existence of the Igbo and the Igala was transformed by the attacks from Ogurugu. It was in the face of such aggression that the older Nri theocracy whose influence extended to the Igala country declined; while the slave trade gave rise to new centres of political power, the emergent policies helped to undermine the influence of the older ones. By extension it could be argued that while the older centres were dependent on religion and political organisation, the new ones were based on wealth and force. Perhaps it is these two aspects of the slave trade that sustain the controversy about its impact in the West African region.

Part II presented in some detail ethnoarchaeological investigations carried out in Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah in the Anambra Valley. Aspects of

the settlement pattern, diet economy and technology of the present inhabitants of the Anambra valley were examined and oral traditions suggested certain sites for excavation and some hypotheses testable by reference to the archaeological data. Archaeological survey and excavation at Aguleri, Ogurugu and Idah were then carried out. The archaeological data suggesting some forms of contact between the two peoples from about the 13th/16th centuries AD. The Igbo-Ukwu finds may extend these contacts between the Igbo and Igala areas to as far back as the 9th century AD.

The present research has shown that an ethnographic approach if and where properly employed, is a relevant way of assessing cultural classificatory systems as well as processes of making, using and doing things. In this study, for instance, in examining the excavated pottery, use was made of ethnographic information, hence a new classificatory system could be suggested - a system more meaningful and related to the people than the supposedly universal arbitrary classificatory systems usually made use of by archaeologists. The ethnographic information has also proved useful for the interpretation of aspects of Igbo and Igala peoples' technology (weaving and iron smelting/smithing) and subsistence activities. Finally, the present research has shown that oral tradition has a positive historical value.

We hope this study has helped in correcting the impression that segmentary societies will leave little or no imprint on the socio-political systems of neighbouring centralised states. It would seem that the emphasis on the influence of centralized polities on segmentary societies, which in most cases was military and political in nature, is a reflection of the fascination and preoccupation of scholars with political rather than cultural history. Above all, the objective of this study has been to contribute to our understanding of the relations between two neighbouring Nigerian groups. In this way it represents a micro-study aimed also as showing that the various Nigerian peoples had interacted before the British colonisation.